

226-228

# CHRISTIANITY The PERFECTION of all RELIGION, Natural and Revealed.

Wherein some of the  
PRINCIPAL PROPHECIES

Relating to the  
**M E S S I A H**

In the  
**OLD TESTAMENT,**

Are shewn to belong to him in the  
*Literal Sense:*

In Opposition to the Attempts of the  
*Literal Scheme, &c.*

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By THOMAS JEFFERY.

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L O N D O N :

Printed for J. CLARK and R. HETT, at the  
Bible and Crown in the Poultry, near Cheapside;  
and R. FORD at the Angel in the Poultry,  
near Stocks-Market. MDCCXXVIII.

CHRISTIANITY

The Praise of

RELIGION

Moral by Racine

With notes by

PRINCIPAL PROPHETS

Replies to his

MAN

of life

OLD TESTAMENT



The known to people in the  
New

Introduction of the Author of the  
Holy Scriptures

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BY THOMAS TATE

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ADONI

Minutes for the Church of England  
Bible and Church in the People's  
and the Lord in the Ministry to the Poor  
and the Poor in the Ministry to the Poor  
MDCCCLXVII

DEDICATION

To the Right Honourable  
Lord Visct. Barrington.

J O H N  
Lord Visct. Barrington.

MY LORD,

WHEN I was determined to contribute my part, small though as it is, to the publick defense of our common Christianity, there was none, whose patronage I

A 2 more

#### iv DEDICATION.

more desired than your Lordship's Your just sense of the principles both of natural and revealed Religion, your diligent enquiries into the meaning of Holy Scripture, and the pleasure you always take in seeing any sincerely, though in a manner vastly inferior to your own, pursue the same noble enquiries, have encouraged me to lay before you the following papers. I am very sensible that your Lordship's exact judgment must observe many flaws; but 'tis with the greatest pleasure I reflect, that the main principles I go upon, have already passed that scrutiny, and been approved; and for the rest, I trust your Lordship's candour for passing by the faults you shall discern in them. What I undertake to defend as plain and simple Christianity as I find it in the New Testament: And this I have endeavoured to do in such a manner, as at once to shew the firm and solid foundations as well of the

2. *Mosaick,*

## DEDICATION. iv

*Mosaick*, as the Christian revelation, I take not upon me the defense either of Priest-craft, or School-Divinity; if I did, I am sensible I could not have been more wrong in my choice of a patron. Thanks be to God, we live in an age that is a little too knowing to let the jargon of the Schools pass for sense, or the rogueries of the Priests, for piety; may this spirit of liberty and inquisitiveness every day increase! I am persuaded, I shall have your Lordship concurring with me in judging, that the evils supposed to arise from liberty, are in reality the natural consequences of somewhat very different. There is nothing that is free from all liableness to abuse, and yet we should think it very hard to be deprived of all blessings of life, and even of reason itself, because some do abuse them. An increase of knowledge may accidentally occasion, but can never be the proper cause of scepticism and infidelity, which

on

## vi DEDICATION.

on the contrary are the natural effect of the imperfection of knowledge. I know your Lordship's judgment will lead you to think, that the true use of liberty will bring men to discover the firm and immovable principles of natural and revealed Religion, which afford the strongest motives to every thing that is praise-worthy; and that where worldly interest does not warp men's minds, it must proceed from excessive weakness of understanding to imagine, that truth can be supported by any thing else than plain reason and argument. For my own part, if I could see that Christianity itself needed any other support, no worldly interest should ever bribe me to the defense of it; but as I am persuaded, that the Gospel contains nothing but what is highly agreeable to reason, and what we have the firmest grounds to believe came from God, so I esteem the belief of it an act of the highest reason, and the defense of it worthy any

## *DEDICATION.* vii

any reasonable creature. I am sensible how far short I come of handling so great and noble an argument as it deserves ; but if I can be any way instrumental to remove a little the rubbish out of the way of the master-builders, and to prepare the way for the reception of those clear and easy principles, which would reconcile all reasonable persons to a Religion, which is the noblest superstructure on natural Religion as its foundation, I shall esteem my imperfect labours very happily employed. In this design, however meanly executed, I doubt not but to receive encouragement from your Lordship, who discover on all occasions the most rational and becoming zeal for promoting truth and liberty, and have often, since I have had the honour to be in your Lordship's neighbourhood, entertained, and instructed me with your conversation on these subjects.

That

## viii DEDICATION.

That God would long continue your Lordship a blessing to the age and nation in which you live, is the hearty prayer of

*My Lord,*

*most obliged and*

*obedient Servant,*

*Little-Baddow, May 10, 1728.* **Thomas Jeffery,**

THE  
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THE

## THE P R E F A C E.

THE state of religion at present in the world, and particularly in this nation, must afford matter of very melancholy reflection to all sober and considerate persons. The bulk of mankind are wholly thoughtless, and take up their religion without either considering the nature or the evidences of it. Great numbers of ingenuous but vicious men, have in good measure wiped out of their minds all sense of good and evil, of a distinction and difference in things; and thus are prepared to profess either no religion, or any religion the civil magistrate shall see fit to propose to 'em: such men are fit instruments for statesmen and politicians to work with, and very often prove the bitterest persecutors. There are other gentlemen who still retain some sense of a difference in things, and some love to truth, but have very much weakened them by endeavouring to dress up every thing in an agreeable manner, in the way of wit and pleasantry: by which means

B

they

they are at length brought to imagine that either there is no such thing as truth, or that it lies too deep for us ever to come at it. The gentlemen of this way are generally great admirers of the writings of the Earl of *Shaftsbury*. I pretend not to be able to judge whether that most ingenious and polite writer had any fixed or settled principles; but I will take the liberty to say this, that his manner of writing, and the principles he has drop'd in some parts of his works, have led many ingenious men to a general scepticism. Those who are acquainted with the *Characteristicks* must have observed one principle which runs thro' 'em, and which the writer is very fond of, *viz.* that ridicule is a proper test of truth in principles, and justice in characters.

This notion I apprehend to be very absurd, and of the worst consequence; for which reason I shall here a little examine it. The Earl allows, that there is a difference in things; that some characters therefore, when justly represented to us, do immediately approve themselves to the reason of our minds; that such characters do not deserve ridicule; that they will not bear it, till something foreign be mixed with them; that 'tis injustice, and a contradiction to the truth of things, to mix those things with a venerable or amiable character which should

should expose it to ridicule. Well now, these concessions being made us, let us see what will be the consequence.

An amiable or venerable character offers it self to my consideration, my reason immediately approves it, I want then no farther test to try it by ; why then should I use ridicule ? besides, the same reason which shews me the goodness of the character, shews me the unfitness of applying ridicule to it.

This I think may be justly objected to this notion when applied to practice in the best manner it can be ; but then when one considers how liable it is to be abused, there will be much more to be said against it. How very difficult is it to set about ridiculing a character without mixing something foreign with it ? The very endeavour to ridicule a character, naturally leads one to the mixing of such things with it as shall make it a proper object of ridicule. Thus an author may very easily deceive himself, and much more easily his readers.

I doubt not but the noble writer I am at present considering, after he had, by the mere force of wit and imagination, dressed up Mr. *Locke's* essay in the ridiculous habit in which it appears in one of his discourses, could not help thinking there was something ridiculous in Mr. *Locke's*

imitable work ; whereas every one that understands that work, will easily see that the ridiculous part was wholly the creature of the Earl's imagination. But since the greatest number of men have a larger share of imagination than reason, and will be sooner pleased with the Earl's wit, than informed by Mr. *Locke*'s reason, the ridicule which is thrown upon Mr. *Locke* will stick to him, with the bulk of mankind, to the great prejudice of true knowledge and virtue.

I don't think the gentlemen of this way are friends to persecution; and yet 'tis certain that ridicule has prepared the way for a persecution, even to death, as in the well-known case of *Socrates*. Upon the whole, when any character is ridiculed, there is either something foreign mixed with it or not ; if there be, the undistinguished ridicule thrown on a character thus mixed, is plainly an injustice ; if there be not, the ridiculing a good character is plainly acting contrary to truth, and tends to wear off from persons minds all sense of a difference in things.

There is reason to think, that there are some sober and virtuous persons who retain all the principles of natural religion, which are represented in a very agreeable manner in the *Characteristicks*, and very strongly defended ; but yet have entertained some prejudices

judices against Christianity, from the false representations that have been given of it by the schoolmen and their followers. I am inclined to hope, that a fair and honest representation of Christianity, as containing the principles of natural religion pure and undefiled, proposing them with such clearness and authority, as is adapted to influence the bulk of mankind, and only superadding some aids and helps to it from the discovery of eternal life made by the Son of God, and confirmed by the gifts of his Holy Spirit, would in great measure reconcile these persons to so excellent a religion as that of the Blessed Jesus. 'Tis with such persons as these that I would argue in behalf of Christianity, and for their use chiefly the following papers were drawn up.

The main doctrines and duties of the christian religion must, I think, recommend themselves to these mens reason; and I hope the following papers will shew, that the offences taken at any other parts of it, are founded on mistake and misrepresentation. It can't be expected but that, considering all the disadvantages we labour under, from ignorance of the language, customs, genius of the Jewish people, and their situation with respect to their neighbour nations, errors of transcribers, and those perhaps in some places wilful ones, &c. there should be some difficulties attending the Old

Testament, which we can't now perfectly clear. These difficulties are vastly less with regard to the New Testament, where we have greater helps from more numerous and more antient copies, citations of other authors, &c. But it must, I think, be owned with respect to the Old Testament, that the main frame of it carries on it all the marks of genuiness and divine authority. It contains an history of the creation, deluge, &c. very agreeable to the most antient traditions of all nations ; and such an history of providence as exactly agrees to our notions of God's perfections. Very wise reasons appear for the separation of the *Israelitish* nation to be God's peculiar people ; and tho' at this distance of time we can't account for every particular law, yet the main frame of their laws appears admirably fitted for the government of that nation, as well as for the answering those more general designs for the common good of mankind, which the great Governor of the world had in view : And tho' we can't now explain every particular prophecy, yet there have been too many plain and punctual accomplishments of prophecies relating to the most contingent events, to give us the least reason to suspect that the pretence to prophecy in the *Jewish* church was an imposture.

The Scripture ever takes for granted the principles of natural religion, and refers us to

to the proper proofs of them from reason, but lays down such a plain, and at the same time just account of them, as can't but be of great service to the bulk of mankind.

The scripture does, I say, not only lay down the principles of natural religion, but directs us to the proper proofs of them from reason; thus it teaches, that the invisible things of God are clearly seen from the things which are made; and from the notion of God which is thus learnt from the works of nature, a providence both natural and moral is easily to be reasoned out; and for the help of the vulgar you have in the Scripture an history of providence, not only with regard to the *Israelites*, but several other nations, and such predictions of the most contingent, and yet considerable events, of whose accomplishments history gives an account as serves to fix the firmest notion of a moral providence on the minds of men: the beauty of virtue in the several branches of it, and its tendency to happiness, are represented in the liveliest manner by *Solomon*, by Christ and the Apostles; and lastly, all the premises from which a future state is concluded, are clearly laid down in scripture. Thus 'tis every where supposed, that God is a lover and rewarder, an equal and perfect rewarder of virtue; an hater, and a perfect and exact

punisher of vice; and yet that all things come alike to all here: the conclusion then makes it self, *viz.* that God will judge the righteous and the wicked hereafter.

The Apostle, *Rom.* viii. 19---23. supposes, that not only those that have received the spirit of Christ, but also that the creature it self, *i. e.* the *Gentile* world that had not received a revelation, tho' for want of this they had no notion, as he shews in other places, of death as the wages of sin, or eternal life as the reward of righteousness, yet groaned under the burden of the present mortal state, longed for a deliverance, and earnestly desired that complete happiness, which revelation assures us is only to be had by our resurrection, with bodies conformed to Christ's glorious body. And thus he points at the great argument for a future state of happiness from those desires of immortal happiness, which as they are common to all men, and perfectly reasonable, must be implanted in us by the wise Author of nature; and therefore, as all other natural and reasonable appetites, have an object proportioned to them.

The Scripture, in all matters of philosophy, gives a popular account of things, and yet at the same time scatters up and down such hints as may lead thinking men to the strict philosophical truth, at the same time

time that the popular description instructs the bulk of mankind in their duty; this may be observed in the Scripture account of the perfections of God, of the creation, of the fall, of the providence of God, to which all events are justly ascribed in some places, at the same time that in other places they are made the consequences of an order of things settled in the world, but settled by the great Author of nature, of the Resurrection of the body, &c.

The Scripture account of the providence of God, with respect to the natural world, which seems to suppose a continual operation of superior spirits, according to regular settled laws, is exactly agreeable to all our notions of matter, as a purely passive being, and is very much confirmed by the discoveries of Sir *Isaac Newton*; and then the alike operation of such invisible agents in the direction of the affairs of the moral world, by influencing the minds of rational agents, preserves a very beautiful analogy between the government of the natural and moral worlds.

'Tis very remarkable, that tho' the Scripture gives a popular, and not philosophical account of things, yet it does not in its accounts contradict true philosophy. So that tho' its accounts of things are sometimes short and imperfect, yet they are not false. Where we imagine the Scripture contains  
false

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false philosophy, it really contains in these places no philosophy. This is the case with respect to the history of the creation, the motions of the heavenly bodies, the resurrection of the body, as we have it described in some places, the accounts of natural and moral providence, which are so represented in some places, as tho' God, or other spirits under his direction, did every thing that is done in the world. The Scripture designs our instruction in morality, rather than in the natural causes of things, and therefore in natural things, without meddling with the causes, gives only such an account of appearances as shall lay a foundation for the practice of virtue; and 'tis observable that tho' some of the penmen of Scripture, as particularly *Moses*, were instructed in the philosophy of their times, yet they give, as particularly he does in his history of the creation, such an account as does not particularly favour that philosophy they had imbibed, but may as well be adapted to another scheme of philosophy not then found out, which is particularly the case of *Moses's* history of the creation, which has been very ingeniously shewn by Mr. *Whiston* to suit Sir *Isaac Newton's* as well or better than any other hypothesis of philosophy whatever: whether this does not shew that these accounts of things came originally from that God who sees from the beginning to

the end of things, I leave to our modern Deists to consider.

The Scripture ever supposes the distinction between the soul and body, in exact agreement with all the discoveries of philosophy, and when it teaches that it is to Christ Jesus that we owe our restoration to a capacity of receiving the rewards of virtue; it teaches nothing that is contrary to true philosophy, which can never discover what restraints the power of our souls may be lain under by their great Author in the invisible state.

It confirms the notions reason furnishes us with, concerning the natural rewards of virtue, and enlarges them by shewing us, that we shall be placed in circumstances fitted to the receiving such rewards, that our capacities shall be enlarged for that purpose, and that we shall be for ever continued in a state of happiness without ever undergoing another trial.

As to moral virtue, the Gospel of Christ is defective in no one point.

This is so very evident a truth, that the enemies of the Gospel have been forced to charge it with too great strictness, rather than with any degree of laxness in its precepts.

But when it is considered that an obedience to the Gospel precepts, in their utmost strictness, is absolutely necessary to the perfection

fection and happiness of the human nature ; and that as Christianity gives men stricter notions of their duty, than any other religion, so it gives the encouragement of greater assistances and rewards, this objection immediately vanishes and disappears. There is one point indeed wherein 'tis pretended Christianity is defective, *viz.* in not recommending private friendships ; but when it is considered that the two great religions in the world before Christianity, *viz.* Heathenism and Judaism corrupted by the Scribes and Pharisees, had too much narrowed and confined benevolence, that it therefore ought to be one great design of Christianity, to enlarge this principle, and to extend it to such as were not thought the proper subjects of it as men of other religions, enemies, &c. that by thus laying down a large and extensive notion of benevolence, Christianity did by just consequence teach the practice of private friendships, as far as conducive to the publick good ; and lastly, that it teaches such a strict union between those who are joyned in promoting true religion and virtue, as was never before recommended to the world : I say, when all these things shall be considered, it will easily appear, that Christianity is not liable to this charge.

Some things there are that Christianity has superadded to natural religion. I am sensible

sensible that there are some very worthy persons, that are very good friends to Christianity, who consider the Gospel of Christ only as a revival of natural religion, which had been corrupted both in the Jewish and heathen worlds. This notion has been lately represented with the greatest strength and beauty, by one who is equalled by very few in clearness of thinking, justice, and propriety of expression, and a sincere love of truth\*. The reasons why I cannot fall in with this account of Christianity are these.

(1.) This does not seem well to suit with the Scripture account of God's revealing the Gospel, not by a man or an angel, but his own Son incarnate, and confirming it by his death, which one cou'd hardly think he would have done, if this Gospel had been no more than that natural religion which had been before taught by *Socrates* and others. On the other hand, consider the Gospel as a revelation of that eternal life, which the light of nature could not discover, and which was to be conferred on us by the Son of God; and then it appears rational to suppose, that this same Gospel should be proposed by the Son of God, incarnate for that purpose. The Son of God was the perfect image of the Father, and thus represents him in his dominion, as well as other perfections. Thus, when the Jews

\* See Mr. Chubb's three late Tracts.

were God's *peculium*, he was their Lord ; and as the Gentiles were at last to be brought into God's kingdom, he was to be Lord of all ; he was designed then to be the great mediator between God and us, by whom God's blessings should be conferred on us, and we have access to God. For this purpose, as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* shews Chap. ii. 'twas fit he should be in a state of suffering, and in order to this 'twas absolutely necessary he should be incarnate.<sup>to</sup>

(2.) Those gentlemen who represent Christianity as nothing but a revival of natural religion, seem to consider Christianity without any relation to former revelations; whereas it plainly supposes, and is built on former revelations, to *Adam*, to *Abraham*, *Moses*, &c. Consider it only absolutely, and it will not appear quite so strange, that God should send even so extraordinary a messenger, to reform those corruptions and abuses that had crept into the jewish and heathen worlds; but when one considers that there have been revelations from the very beginning of the world (as the Gospel of Christ ever supposes) the expedience of a revelation in some particular circumstances, as of a general corruption of the principles of natural religion, will not shew how 'tis fit there should be a revelation from the beginning, before there was such a corruption

on of the principles of natural religion. But now, when one considers revelation as from the beginning, the discovery of eternal life as the reward of righteousness, or of what God was pleased to accept for it, which natural reason could not discover, but which when discovered appears a fit means to promote the great end of natural religion : I say, when one considers revelation as such a discovery of eternal life, first more obscurely and imperfectly made, by degrees more clearly and fully, and at last most perfectly ; and this not to the Jews only, but the Gentiles also, by the Son of God, who is appointed to bestow this life, every thing is clear and consistent.

(3.) As there may easily be supposed to be many things very useful for us to know, which our natural reason could not have discovered ; so it may reasonably be supposed, that when God departs from the common methods of his providence, so far as to make a revelation to us, his revelation should contain some such things as these ; and not only what our natural reason might have discovered to us, especially considering that our natural reason can discover to us its own defects, and particularly in our searches after a future state, we can easily see how much we might be helped by a revelation.

(4.) If

(4.) If Christianity were only a revival of natural religion, corrupted by Jews and Heathens, and an aid to the vulgar, who could not trace out these things from the first principles, when once these corruptions of Jews and Heathens were removed, those who use their reason in a right manner, would be able to discover all the principles of Christianity, in a more direct and certain manner, than by dependance on a revelation. And thus in giving the Gospel, God would afford a revelation which should not be of general use, as that is ever represented in the New Testament; as being.

(5.) Christ is ever represented both by himself and his apostles, as having been in the bosom of the Father; and thus revealing to the world those things which no man on earth could reveal; discovering such secrets as none but God's own Son could disclose, particularly discovering eternal life, which, tho' known to the Jews from the *Abrahamick covenant*, yet was perfectly concealed from the *Gentiles*, as the particulars of it, which Christ discovered, were even from the Jews themselves. See to this purpose, *Jo.* i. 18. iii. 12, 13, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36. vi. 27--64, 68, 69. x. 10, 11. xii. 50. xvii. 2, 3. *2 Tim.* i. 10, 11. *Tit.* ii. 2, 3. *Heb.* ii. 15. *Rom.* viii. 19--24. *1 Pet.* i. 3, 4. *Eph.* ii. 1--7. *1 Job.* v. 11, 12, --20. *1 Job.* ii. 25. (6.) 'Tis

(6.) 'Tis plain the Gospel has discovered, as will be fully shewn in the following papers, the particulars of the future state of existence, both of happiness and misery, which as depending on the pure will of God, determined by reasons concealed from us, could not have been known without a revelation ; and from hence it necessarily follows, that revelation is not merely a revival of the principles of natural religion, but also an additional discovery of such means as are fit to promote the great end of natural religion. The whole of what Christianity has superadded to the principles of natural religion, is the doctrine of eternal life revealed by the Son of God incarnate, confirmed by his death, resurrection, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost ; and this eternal life to be bestowed by the Son of God, who has power over all flesh, to give eternal life to as many as God has given him, who at present is the head over all things to his church, the medium of conveying blessings to us, and of our access to God, and will at last raise the dead, and adjudge all to eternal life or death, according to their works.

The philosophers were very much set against the doctrine of the resurrection ; but then they misunderstood it, as if it were the resurrection of the same body of flesh and blood ; and therefore in opposition to this

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notion, St. Paul, i Cor. xv. shews that flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God, but that the raised body should be as different from this, as celestial bodies are from terrestrial, &c. and against this doctrine the philosophers had no objection. On the contrary, they taught much the same themselves, whilst they asserted the union of the soul after death with bodies of a quite different texture from the present, fitted to attend the noblest operations of the mind in the other state. What the Gospel teaches of eternal life, is either only what reason teaches concerning the natural rewards of virtue stripped of those false notions which either wrong philosophy or the superstition of the vulgar had added to it, and is the very same with the account which Tully gives in his *Tusculan Question*, *Scipio's Dream*, and treatise of *old Age*; or else it is a discovery of what natural reason could not teach, but which when discovered appears perfectly agreeable to natural reason; such as the account of that dominion good men shall after the resurrection receive, which as conferred by God as the reward of virtue, and to be exercised according to His will, the love and regard to it must be a love and regard to virtue itself. As the happiness of good men in another state is, according to the Scripture account, a social happiness; so the regard

regard to it cannot weaken, but on the contrary must very much strengthen the benevolent principle. The doctrine of a Mediator is perfectly agreeable to reason; and though the Heathens were faulty in worshipping mediators of their own devising, without a divine appointment; yet this shews their natural notions of the fitness of God's appointing a medium of conveying blessings to us, and of our access to himself.

I have endeavoured in two former treatises,\* to lay down the true grounds of Christianity, fairly to represent the evidences for the divinity of the Gospel, and to shew that the argument of late advanced against it from the prophecies, falls quite wide of the point in dispute; and in the last of these discourses I adventured, but I hope with all due deference to their great worth and learning, to make a few remarks on some of the most considerable authors on this controversy. The following papers are a continuation of the same design, in which I shall state the difference between natural and revealed religion, shew what evidence is to be reasonably expected for the latter, and that Christianity has such evidence both external and internal; represent the true force of the argument from the prophecies of

\* *The true Grounds and Reasons, and the Review, &c.*

the Old Testament in behalf of Christianity, and shew that it can't with any pretence of reason be turn'd against it; account for the expressions of Christ and the Apostles concerning the great number of prophecies in the Old Testament relating to the Messiah, farther explain some of the prophecies in the Old Testament, relating to the Messiah, and defend that interpretation of them which refers 'em to him against the attempts of the *Literal Scheme*; shew that the quotations in the New Testament from the old sometimes contain only allusions; but when they are designed as arguments are conclusive, either as direct proofs, or as arguments *a simili*. And lastly, farther shew St. *Paul* to be a rational writer, by endeavouring to make the scheme of his reasoning in three argumentative epistles, laid down in the review more complete.

I have but one thing to add, and that is an acknowledgment of great light which I have received in the present argument from a very learned and worthy gentleman, who designs very soon to publish *Principles of a rational defence of religion*, If the following Papers, in some parts of them, serve to make his noble and masterly thoughts more easily apprehended by the vulgar, and the use of his abstract reasonings o appear, by applying them to the solving  
some

some considerable difficulties in the New Testament, I shall esteem my labours very happily employed. I must freely acknowledge that from him I received the first hints of the nature and consequences of the Fall; of the method of recovery by Christ; of the analogical reasonings in the New Testament, particularly in St. Paul's Epistles.

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## ERRATA.

Page 28 l. 17 read *Causes*. p. 30 l. 8 read were *Not.* p. 54 read  
after *Prophecies*. p. 60 l. 3 for *Had* read *And*. p. 64 l. 24  
read that *some might be*. p. 83 l. 1 read *Spirit of Christ*. l. 5 dele the  
*Spirit of Christ*. p. 104 l. 14 read *are apt to*. p. 132 l. 17 add, *made to*  
*some particular Persons*. p. 148 l. 26 read how *justify he*. p. 150 l. 21  
dele *their*. l. 22 dele *then*. p. 173 l. 10 read by *a few mean*. p. 181  
l. 25 read *has attained its*. p. 201 l. 31 read *suppose or Jeremy, &c.*  
p. 207 l. 24 dele *one would reasonably think*. p. 238 l. 7 read *used*. p.  
243 l. 25 dele *and*. l. 27 dele *which yet he lost*. p. 248 in the Notes l.  
28 read *would bring them to listen to his*. p. 250 in the Notes l. 36 read  
*into the World*. p. 252 l. 7. read *induced*. p. 287 l. 13. dele *particularly*.  
p. 291 l. 17 read *Gentiles*. Eph. ii. 20. p. 295 l. 17 read *him who is*. p.  
320 l. 4 read *your*. p. 321 l. 8. read *desolate*. p. 334 l. 2. for *with*  
read *from*. p. 345 l. 25 for *also read as*. p. 371 l. 22 for *in read by*.  
p. 373 l. 3 for *as read was*. l. 14 for *as read whereas*. p. 395 l. 6. read  
*but still*. p. 418 l. 11 dele *but now*. p. 431 l. 27 read *represent it*.

# CHRISTIANITY

**NATURAL RELIGION,**

## Former Revelations.

### C H A P. I.

**T**RUE religion is one simple, uniform, invariable thing ; it may stand of itself without the aids of revelation, and then we call it natural religion ; or it may have the aids of revelation adapted to the particular circumstances of a particular people as the Mosaick : Or lastly, it may have the aids of a revelation adapted to the general circumstances

of mankind, as the Christian revelation, which is therefore the most perfect religion. As to all other religions, separate from them what is false and erroneous, and they are reducible to this one simple religion.

Natural religion is nothing else but what our own reason, from the circumstances we are in, *certainly* discovers to be fit and proper for us to do; and therefore to be the will of the infinitely wise and powerful Governour of all things, who will take care that we shall reap the natural fruits of our own doings; revealed religion gives an aid and help to that which is natural, by assuring us of the supernatural reward of eternal life to be bestowed on those that please God, and of God's acceptance of a sincere and constant endeavour to do the whole will of God instead of perfection. The Christian religion gives the fullest account of this, by shewing how God bestowed this eternal life, *viz.* by the man Christ Jesus, who for his discovery of more than the most perfect human virtue, in emptying himself of the form of God, taking on him the form of a servant, humbling himself yet farther to become obedient to death, even the death of the Cross, was highly exalted and had a name given him above every name; had not only eternal life himself, but a power to give it to  
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as many as were conformed to the Image of his holiness.

The difference between natural and revealed religion does not lie here, that the one is reasonable, the other unreasonable; there is a reason for all the positive appointments of revelation as well as for our natural duties, though sometimes that reason is drawn from the particular circumstances of a particular people in ages distant from ours, and therefore perhaps unknown to us. We may sometimes by the light of nature discover such reasons for God's doing what revelation assures he will do, as may make that *probable*, which revelation, *on supposition it be made*, renders *certain*. And when revelation assures us, how the *will* of God has determined, our own reason may shew us, *with good degree of evidence*, the moral fitness of the choice; *v. g.* our own natural powers may enable us to discover some reasons why God should appoint a mediator, and by consequence the worship of himself by him: But they could not discover that *certainly he would*; our own reason would farther discover, that if God had appointed such mediator, he would, since it is undiscoverable by reason either that there was one appointed, or who it was that was appointed, reveal such appointment of his

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to the world, in order to the directing their worship in a suitable manner ; and therefore till such revelation appeared, that we ought to take no notice of such appointment in our worship ; but however, as it appears to us, with good degree of evidence, that it is a thing fit and proper in itself there should be such an appointment, a revelation that gives a reasonable account of such an appointment cannot but come with advantage to us. \*

The difference then upon the whole, between natural and revealed religion, lies here.

\* The morality of actions, as Mr. *Wollaston* has fully proved, lies in their agreeableness to truth or any true proposition ; this may be farther explained in this manner, things are what they are, whether you suppose any judgment passed on them or no.

Suppose a being to pass a Judgment concerning them, if he judges them to be what they are, he judges right, and so *vice versa* ; add in your thoughts active power to this being, and an action supposed in consequence of this right judgment, will be an action according to truth. True Propositions are formed concerning matters of fact as well as speculation. Revelation is a medium by which we may come to know certain matters of fact which we should not otherwise know : Thus our Saviour, as Dr. *Burnet* has well shewn in his *Boyle's Lectures*, argues very closely against divorce from the perfect state in which mankind were first formed, which the History of *Moses* gives an account of. Thus when this fact is known that Christ is appointed by God, Lord of all, there appears a fitness in the appointment of some proper badge, as the distinction of his subjects, viz. Baptism.

Natural religion, as contradistinguished to revealed religion, contains the end of religion, *viz.* such a conformity to God as renders us fit to receive happiness from him; revealed religion supplies us with some of the means in order to this end; natural religion discovers its obligations to all sober and attentive minds in all ages and countries of the world. Revealed religion concerns only those, to whom its obligations have been particularly made known, either immediately or mediately, by those to whom the revelation was first committed; the moral fitness of every part of natural religion is *certainly*, of revealed religion only *probably* discovered. The instance before-mentioned of praying through a Mediator will make this whole matter perfectly plain; the end of praying thro' a Mediator, is the promoting those good dispositions in us which natural religion recommends; those good dispositions themselves approve themselves *immediately* to every attentive person's mind, and therefore are required by God from all: But the method of promoting these by praying thro' a Mediator, none are required to conform to; but those to whom it is made known by particular extraordinary revelation; when once a revelation has been made, we may discern those reasons which per-

persuade us of the fitness of this method, though we could not, *a priori*, have demonstrated that God must take this method; but on the other hand, if a revelation concerning it had not appeared, that would very much have weakened the evidence of the probable arguments for such an appointment.

The idea of revelation which is most agreeable to our natural expectations is of an aid to natural religion, by the *certain discovery* of some fit means in order to promote its great end.

Suppose those means which revelation teaches, *certainly* discoverable by reason, and tho' you from thence are furnished with a demonstrative proof that it is in general the will of God you should use these means, yet this discovery weakens the evidence of any particular person's mission from Heaven to bring you to *believe* a doctrine divine, which by other methods you *certainly know to be so*.

## C H A P. II.

*Of the evidence to be expected for revealed religion.*

**I**T is plain from what has been said in the foregoing chapter, that revealed religion cannot have mathematical evidence to support it ; the moral fitness of the things delivered must only appear with probability ; and the proof that they come from God can be only probable.

The evidence for revealed religion I would state thus ; (1.) it appears fit God should set on foot a design for the reformation of the world. (2.) A fit way of executing this design seems to be by sending a person with commission from himself to instruct us in our duty, excite to the performance of it by suitable motives, and go before us by the example of his own life. (3.) There is a connection between truth, goodness and power ; the two former must have the favour of God, and so a proportionable degree of power from him to give them success ; if there be no reason then against a religion, the professors of it discovering a power that others have not, is a reason for it, not demonstrative indeed, since it may fail, but proba-

probable which generally holds good as it must do if truth and goodness have in the nature of things, or by the favour of God, any advantage above error and vice ; when we cannot therefore judge directly of the reason of things, power supplies us with a probable argument, as success does of the goodness of a method in physick. And thus the power attending all religions in the world, which is superiour to Atheism, is a probable proof of religion.

(4.) When we can judge ourselves of the truth of things, we need not power to shew it us ; but an act of power may excite us to consider the reason of things, and in defect of demonstrative evidence, from thence give us probable evidence ; (5.) As God from eternity had in view the whole frame of things, and adjusted every thing in exactest order, he saw that it would be proper on certain occasions, that would happen, that revelations should be made by him to some men to be delivered by them to others ; as he knew the powers he would give to some intermediate beings between himself and man, and that works performed by them would be adapted to convince us of such revelations ; the making such revelations on proper occasions, and attesting the truth of them in such a manner, is perfectly agreeable to those laws by which God governs the moral world.

(6.) When a person pretends to come from God, and discovers a power above human, that is a probable proof of his mission; a sufficient proof, where there is nothing in the nature of his message that overthrows it, or no superior power to counterwork him; for power itself is a probable argument of truth, and power above human is the fittest external evidence of a divine mission, since this is the fullest discovery of divine power exerted in a person's favour that can be given; for as we do not know the powers of beings above us, nor can judge from the work itself when God immediately interposes; a work above human power, which we do not know but it may be done immediately by God, is the greatest discovery can be made us of the divine favour. (7.) When besides miracles there appears a moral fitness of things, the evidence for revelation is complete: For how can we judge whether any thing comes from God but by comparing it with our natural notions of God? Now the only perfections of God that can direct us here are knowledge, wisdom, goodness and power: Of these, wisdom and goodness are discovered in the frame of the doctrine, and knowledge and power in those discoveries that are made of more than human knowledge and power, which discover divine know-

knowledge and power as far as there can be discovered to us.

If now it appears fit to us there should be a revelation made as by a man like our selves, and this be the utmost evidence such a one could bring us of his mission, and this evidence is afforded us, we have all the reason in the world to give credit to a revelation so attested. Of this case, where a moral fitness appears, there may be two instances given. (1.) When the main end propos'd appears reasonable and fit, tho' not the greatest end that could be propos'd, and the means chosen are fitted to that end, tho' we don't see how all the parts of the revelation are fitted to that end, or to what other end they are fitted; and this is the case of Judaism; we see a wise end propos'd, *viz.* the separating a particular people for preserving the pure worship of God in the world, and tho' this be not the greatest end could be proposed by a revelation, yet 'tis fit in it self, and prepares the way for this greater end. The design of such separation of this people being, that they might be the depositaries of the promise before made of a great Person to come in time into the world, to restore mankind to happiness by holiness. The several parts of the law, do for the main appear wisely adapted to this end; and very often when we cannot assign a particular

particular reason of a law, yet we may give the general one, viz. that hereby the *Israelites* were yet farther distinguished from other nations. And when we can discern no reason of a particular law at all, the apparent wisdom of the main frame of the law, naturally leads us to think there it is a wisdom in that part also where we do not discern it, just as we argue very justly concerning those parts of the Creation whose uses we have not yet discovered.

Very probably this was the case in some particular instances, even at the first giving the law, with respect to the *Israelites* themselves, who did not discern the reason of all their own laws, particularly not of those which were designed to make some after-revelation more easily understood, and readily received when it should appear, 'till which time these laws must be necessarily involved in darkness, it being impossible to compare a picture with the original, 'till one is acquainted with both. And tho' as to such laws as these, we who have seen this after-revelation, have greater advantages for understanding them, than the *Israelites* at that time had; yet as to other laws, the reasons of which were taken from the particular circumstances of the *Israelites* at that time; as the genius of their nation, the nature of the country, their situation with respect to other nations, &c.

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They must be much better judges of their fitness than we at this distance of time, and who differ from them so vastly in language, customs, &c. and labour under so great ignorance of theirs. (2.) Another instance may be where the end appears the best that could be, as the general reformation of mankind, and the means the best fitted to the end, as the proposing a Scheme of doctrines and duties that are suited to the circumstances of all mankind, and fitted to carry human nature to the utmost perfection we can conceive of. In this case we are able perfectly to discover the fitness of things our selves, because the Institution is framed not for the use of a particular people, but suited to the general circumstances of mankind.

(3.) When a person pretends to bring a revelation from God, that has these characters of divinity upon it, he ought to be received, If revelation be a thing reasonable to be expected, then a person who pretends to come from God, and appears neither on the one hand by any of his actions or discourses, even on the subject of religion and his divine mission, an enthusiast; nor on the other hand by any worldly views to which his institutions are adapted, an impostor, ought to be received as sent of God if there be no reason to the contrary; especially if he pretends to immediate communicati-

ons with God, and to be infallibly certain (as it appears probable to us God may make a person) that he received revelations immediately from God himself, and confirms the truth of what he says by shewing all the marks of divine knowledge, wisdom, power and goodness in his doctrine, and the works that support the credit of it.

(9.) It may reasonably be expected that the greatest power, as a mark of divine favour, should attend the most perfect religion, which indeed it will require in order to give it that general reception in the world, which it is designed to have.

One true miracle is evidence that ought to be admitted for a revelation when there is no greater counter-evidence; for tho' it be not a demonstrative proof, and therefore be overthrown by something discovered in the doctrine that is unworthy of God, or by some superior work wrought in opposition to it; yet 'till such counter-evidence appears, there is greater reason to admit such proof than to reject it.

If we reject miracles as evidences of a revelation, we reject what our reason shews us to be the proper evidence of a revelation; and if we reject a revelation supported by miracles, where there appears no greater reason for rejecting it, than miracles are for receiving it, we reject miracles as evidences of a revelation.

Any number of miracles and discovering ever so great power, can only be superior evidence in the *same kind* to *one single miracle* of the least degree of power conceivable. *Moses* turned a rod into a serpent, and this till there appeared a greater reason to the contrary, was of itself sufficient on reasonable grounds to have convinced the *Israelites* he was sent of God; but when the magicians did the like in opposition to him, 'twas reasonable to be expected he should discover a power superior to theirs.

If another person should appear with the same proof of his mission that *Moses* first brought, he ought to be received if there be no greater reason to the contrary; otherwise *Moses* ought not to have been received by the *Israelites* at his first appearing; and yet such a work could not prove the magicians mission from God if they pretended it, because there was on account of a superior power counter-working them, greater reason to reject, than the miracle wrought could be for receiving it. Thus when two persons work a miracle, one to attest a doctrine worthy, the other unworthy of God, the miracle will prove the mission of the former, but not the latter.

The reason is, because tho' miracles are evidences of a revelation, and therefore will

prove it where there is no greater reason to the contrary, yet they are only probable proofs, not demonstrative; and so there may be counter-evidence produced that shall be greater. But now if miracles were not of themselves some evidences of a revelation, and so did not sufficiently prove a revelation where there is no superior counter-evidence, they could not prove it in any case, or at all contribute to the strengthening the proof of it in any case, or clothed with any circumstances whatsoever.

If the greatest number of miracles, discovering the greatest degree of power we can conceive be of the highest evidence (as we commonly imagine) tho' I should rather think the highest evidence should be such a number of miracles, and of such a nature, and discovering such degrees of power as appear best fitted to promote the end proposed; then one single miracle of the lowest sort must be some evidence; and yet a revelation no better attested may be overthrown by superior counter-evidence; but when there appears no such counter-evidence, there one single miracle is sufficient proof of a revelation, and one single miracle of less degree of power may be as wisely and exactly fitted to attest a particular revelation as more and greater miracles are a general one, and so be as fit

and proper evidence of it. For as it would be an objection against a general revelation to have but one single miracle of the lowest degree of power to attest it, when it needed more and greater, so it would be just as good an objection against a particular one to have many and great miracles attesting it, when it did not need such.

The sum then of the whole is this; miracles as such are evidences of a revelation, where there is no superior counter-evidence; there is no superior counter-evidence, where the end proposed to be attained by them is not unworthy of God, as the attesting a vicious doctrine, &c. and the miracles wrought are means fitted to attain the ends, *as a few miracles of less power* to attest a revelation of use only to a particular person, family, &c. *more and greater miracles* to attest a revelation of *general and perpetual use to mankind.*

When a person appears with this latter kind of revelation, he ought not to be rejected, because there does not immediately appear the entire evidence for the proof of his doctrine from the discovery of greater power than ever attested any other doctrine.

The miracles he is to work are to be wrought not all at once, but at different times, and as occasions are offered for 'em, and therefore there is no reason for rejecting

jecting a Person coming with such a revelation, because he does not at his first appearance perform all those works we may have reason some time or other to expect, will attest a general and standing revelation.

'Tis fit he should by degrees awaken and raise mens attention by his works, and these such as should by degrees discover greater and greater measures of power attending his doctrine as he had occasion for 'em. 'Tis fit he should perform his works, not for ostentation but usefulness, and therefore that he should discover his power, as there occurred fit objects for the exercise of it. 'Tis reasonable to suppose he should perform no works but what were of use to promote his wise and good designs; and therefore if for wise reasons his doctrine be for a time confined to a particular country, it is not to be expected as yet, that there should be any discovery of the gift of tongues.

But then, as that is necessary afterwards to spread it throughout the world, when the reason for confining it to a particular country ceases, the exercise of the gift of tongues for the general diffusion of the knowledge of it in the world is reasonably to be expected. In the mean time the works already performed give us reasonable ground to expect, that in due time that gift also

will be conferred in order to make this doctrine answer the great and wise ends of its publication. Thus the miracles he has already performed are evidences of this Person's divine mission, whilst no superior counter-evidence appears, and are proper pledges and earnests of those greater works which our own reason teaches us to expect, and which it may be he foretels shall in time be wrought for the general spreading and lasting settlement of his doctrine in the world, just as in the case of Prophecies, those already accomplished are fit pledges of the accomplishment of such as are to be accomplished in the latter ages of the world.

This seems to us the proper evidence of revelation, but there is something more required in order to satisfy them who live at a greater distance from the time when the revelation was first made, that there has been a revelation so attested; now the utmost degree of evidence that can be afforded in this case, I think is this, *viz.* that *a priori* we have probable reasons to conclude that God would make a revelation at the time when he did, such a revelation as 'tis pretended he hath made and attested in such a manner, and by such methods as this is pretended to have been attested; that the facts on which this revelation is built be related in books, whose genuiness

genuineness we have no more, nor indeed so much reason to question as the genuineness of any other ancient books; and upon supposition of whose genuineness the facts are better supported than any other ancient facts whatsoever; and lastly, that there has been, and still continues to be, just such a state of things as *must necessarily be the consequence of such facts supposed true*, but as can never reasonably be supposed the consequence of such facts supposed false.

All that remains now to be made out, is that such evidence as this is sufficient to determine our assent. The evidence of revelation depends on the credibility of *human testimony*, and this rests on this firm and immovable foundation of reason, *viz.* that a rational being will always declare the truth as far as he knows it, when there is no reason to the contrary. All the motives that can be proposed to the mind of man are viewed by an omniscient being; who therefore can pronounce with certainty concerning any declarations of men, whether they are agreeable to their sense of things or no; but this is what we cannot do, only thus far we go, the more perfectly we are acquainted with the Person who makes a declaration, and with the reasons which should induce him either to declare the truth or falsehood, the nearer will our judgment approach to absolute

solute certainty. A reasonable being that discerns what is right and fit, and has no motives to act otherwise, will always chuse to do what is right and fit: God therefore always declares nothing as truth, but what he knows to be so. Men may have motives to declare contrary to their sense of things, but as truth is a motive fitted to determine any reasonable mind whatsoever when there is no superior motive, any one's testimony is a reason for the belief of what he testifies, when there is no reason to believe the contrary, and the reason gathers strength if the person be of known abilities, integrity, and have no interest to deceive you, but quite contrary, if many others be joined with him in the testimony, &c.

The credibility also of the thing attested is of great consequence in the present case; generally speaking, a testimony concerning the truth of a fact that we have known commonly to happen in the world, is the most credible; and yet a case may be put wherein the unusualness of an event shall be no diminution of the evidence. It appears fit there should be a revelation from God, and that the revelation be attested by miracles; and the very nature of miracles is such, as supposes their being unusual works. If then there be nothing in the nature of the doctrine attested, or the miracles that attest it unworthy

worthy of God, and no want of evidence for proof of the facts, the objection against miracles, from their being unusual works, will at last amount to this gross absurdity, *viz.* that God cannot make a revelation when it appears fit he should make it, or that he should give no attestation of its truth at all ; or lastly, should attest it by ordinary and common works of his providence, i. e. by such works as are not at all fitted to attest it ; which in other words is to say, that a being of perfect wisdom cannot pursue an end which 'tis fit for him to pursue, or must prosecute it by means not at all fitted to the attainment of it.

From what has been said it evidently follows, that just as a person who should deny that truth has any influence on the mind of man, or that should in his actions behave as tho' he was so persuaded, would declare and act contrary to truth : So he who should not give assent to the testimony of man, when there was no superior reason to the contrary, would in like manner contradict truth ; and that, tho' for want of knowing all the motives of human testimony, we may mistake in our judgments concerning the truth or falsehood of it. Yet we always act according to truth, when we behave as those who give credit to human testimony, when there is no superior reason to the contrary ; and on the contrary

contrary we contradict the truth, when we behave otherwise.

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### C H A P. III.

*Concerning the truth of the facts on which Christianity is built.*

HAVING shewn what evidence may be expected for revelation in general, and particularly for a revelation that pretends to be designed to answer those ends, which the Christian does, I shall now examine whether the Christian revelation really has this evidence or no. Now I think there are but four ways by which we can be assured of the truth of ancient facts. (1.) By monuments erected in memory of them, or festivals observed from age to age, &c. Thus the grand facts of Moses's history were preserved, and thus also were the main facts of the Gospel by the Lord's-supper, &c. see *Lesley's* short way with the Deist. (2.) By authentick histories, i. e. such as we have uncontrolled tradition to prove the genuiness of, and such as were written by men who were well acquainted with the facts, and had no interest that should lead them to deceive us. I shall not go over all the books which contain

tain the main facts of Judaism and Christianity, and shew their genuineness and truth, which has been often done to excellent purpose by others, but shall confine my self to St. *Paul's* Epistles for the proof of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which are the main evidence for Christianity.

1. Then I shall prove the genuineness of these Epistles; and,

2. From thence establish the truth of the facts.

(1.) Then that these Epistles are genuine is plain, because being addressed to such noted churches, in so considerably populous cities, and when Christianity had spread so much, relating to such remarkable affairs, and containing so many particulars of his own life and the circumstances of the churches to which he writes; if they had been forged, the forgery had been easily detected by the clashing of the accounts with each other, or their disagreement with St. *Paul's* history in the *Acts*; or lastly, by express declarations of those churches that they had either never receiv'd any letters from St. *Paul* relating to these affairs, or that these were not the letters, whereas on the contrary

Thirteen Epistles of St. *Paul* were from the beginning acknowledged for his without one, as far as appears, opposing their genuineness.

(2.) Sup-

(2.) Supposing the genuiness of them, the facts do prove themselves. St. *Paul* addresses two of his Epistles to churches that were tempted to discard his authority, when there were some that endeavoured to run him down, and had met but with too much success on some members, particularly in the church of *Corinth*: Now here the Apostle not only appeals to the miracles he had wrought among them; but even to those gifts he had conferred on them: how easily, if this had been all cheat, might the Apostle's pretensions have been confuted? how could those he wrote to be satisfied with such a palpable notorious falsehood? how is it possible they who bore a spleen against the Apostle, should have forbore to detect the cheat and sink his credit for ever? supposing him but a man of common sense, had he known his cause to be wrong, he would never have put it on such an issue as must infallibly have discovered his intrigues; I shall only add, that since it cannot be expected an adversary, continuing so, should relate the main facts of Christianity, these facts being related by St. *Paul*, who had been an adversary, and this in the way of an appeal to adversaries, and the appeal unanswered, is the highest evidence we can possibly have. See this argument managed to the greatest

est advantage in the first Essay of *Miscellanea Sacra*.

(3.) *Another way of establishing the truth of ancient facts is, by considering whether from preceding circumstances, it be probable such things should have been done, at the time and in the place when they are said to be done.*

A revelation is pretended from God, this is a thing credible, because we see some reasons for which God should make a revelation. It is a thing credible there should be various revelations, all preparing the way for one *full and complete, general and perpetual* revelation. Such a revelation appears, framed in all its parts to answer the end proposed, its doctrines fitted to attain the greatest end could be proposed by revelation, giving light to and completing the design of former revelations; and for their divinity appealing to such evidence as is fitted to spread them generally in the world, and make them answer their designed end, and for want of which those that had before attempted the reformation of mankind, did not succeed. A revelation, such as this, and supported as this pretends to be, was at that time and in the then circumstances of mankind absolutely necessary for the thorough reformation of the world, and at all times and in all places. It contained the means that appeared exactly

ly fitted to attain the end of revelation; and which natural reason could not furnish with the knowledge of, *viz.* the doctrine of eternal life. The *Jewish* prophecies had raised over all the east an expectation of a great person to come. Christ is said to have appeared at a time when such expectations were raised of him, at a time when the *Roman* arms had civiliz'd a great part of the world, amongst those people whose expectations of him were strongest; and lastly, his doctrine is promulg'd in that part of the world that is thus civilized, and so best prepared for receiving of it, as well as fittest to examine the evidences of it.

(4.) The last way of examining an ancient fact is by considering whether there has been ever since, and is now such a state of things in the world, as must certainly be supposed if these facts were true, but the contrary to which every reasonable person would have expected in case they had been false.

It has never been denied by any that there was such a person as Jesus, that he lived at such a time, place, &c. that he went about preaching good moral doctrine, that he was one of mean birth and education, without power, interest, &c. that he was put to death, that he had in his life-

life-time foretold his resurrection within such a time ; that this was afterwards pretended to be fact by his followers ; that his religion did not die with him, but there was a very great spread of it not only in *Judea*, but in other parts of the *Roman Empire*, even amidst violent and continued persecutions in that and some following ages ; all which could never have happened if the facts on which his religion was founded had been proved false, as they must have been if they had been so.

The *Jews* have since been spread into all parts of the world ; they are bitter enemies to the Gospel, yet many of the facts of Christianity they own ; others which they deny, they don't so much as pretend to have any history or tradition, giving an account of the manner of their being detected. They have counter-histories to ours of later date, but then besides many palpable absurdities in them, and inconsistencies with themselves and other authentick histories, they contain nothing that affects the truth of Christianity ; since they don't so much as pretend that any thing of this was published at or near the time when the facts were done, or give any account how our pretended facts were detected of falsehood. Nay, they don't so much as pretend to have any authentick accounts, whether oral or written, of the detection of the

falshood of our facts, or of any consequences that might be supposed to follow so important a transaction.

On the contrary, all the consequences are just the contrary to such a supposition, *viz.* a religion spread not only without, but against power, policy, &c.

Upon the whole then, what better proof can we have of a fact than this? here is direct positive evidence for it. We next consider what consequences might be supposed to follow, either the truth or falshood of it; we find the facts which did follow just such as might be supposed to follow from it if true, and as would necessarily be the consequence of that truth, if there were not some other changes to hinder; *v. g.* the Jews did not detect the cheat of Christianity: Now this on supposition of their implacable hatred of Christianity and power to have crushed it, they must necessarily have done, except there were some more prevailing motive to the contrary, which does not appear.

Christianity spread in the world, there must be some cause of this, and this of force to resist the hindrance of its spreading from the meanness of the teacher, want of power, policy, &c. contradictory to prevailing doctrines, honours and interests of men, &c.

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This progress of the Gospel is a necessary consequence of its truth and divine original, but its fall is a necessary consequence of its falsehood, except there were, which does not appear, a cause sufficient to support it, which must be a cause adequate to the overcoming all the hindrances that lay in the way of its spreading.

Again, if the facts of Christianity were false, 'tis another necessary consequence of this, that men that hate it, and have power to detect the cheat, should detect it, except, which does not appear, in the case of the *Jews*, there could be supposed more powerful motives to the contrary: lastly, if Christianity were a cheat, and had been (as it might reasonably be expected it would be) detected for such, then if there were a number of men scattered and dispersed into all quarters of the world that had a mortal hatred to it, preserved separate and distinct through the successive ages of the Gospel's prevalence, descendants of those that had detected the cheat, they must have kept up the memory of this, and spread the knowledge of the detection as far as the knowledge of the cheat goes, all quite contrary to plain fact. All this reasoning is built on this, *viz.* that every effect must have a cause; and therefore, as it must be influenced by something that precedes it, so it must draw some consequences after it,

on which the judgment that is passed concerning future events depends, which in God, to whom all causes are naked and open, is certain and infallible, but in us, who have an imperfect view of them, must be fallible; but the more causes we know that would produce an effect, and the more reasons we have to think there were other causes in being that did hinder their operation, the nearer our judgments approach to absolute certainty.

I will only add under this head, that as to the fact of the miracles of Christ, and the gifts of the H. Ghost exercised by the Apostles, and by them conferred on others, there will be as great discovery of a miraculous power if this were not fact as if it were. For since it was certainly generally believed, there cannot be supposed a more miraculous power exerted, than that of making so many persons believe they saw works wrought which they did not see, and even that they experienced certain powers within themselves, which indeed they experienced nothing at all of: Strictly speaking we have the original evidence for Christianity continued with us till this very age, since we see Christianity continued and preserved in the world, which requires a power as exactly proportioned to this lesser effect, as the other which attended it, to make it first take root in the world, was

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to that greater effect ; and since we see in the continuance of Christianity in the world, the effect of that power which first caused it to take root, and without which we see plainly, as it was at first circumstanced, it could never have taken root. We now see the Gospel received and believed in great part of the world ; this could not be, if it had not broke through the difficulties which lay in the way of its first spreading in the world, but this it could never have done, if it had not been for those powers which attended it, and gave it that amazing success : Particularly the gift of tongues, by which means a few illiterate men were enabled to spread a religion amongst nations whose languages they had never learnt.

## C H A P. IV.

### *A general account of the nature of the Christian Revelation.*

WE shall, I apprehend, take in every thing essential to Christianity, if we consider Christ the author and finisher of our faith in these three characters of a Prophet, Priest and King.

Let us consider him as a Prophet ; and as such, (1.) he has revived the principles of natural religion in the world. He has excited and awakened men to the serious consideration of 'em, and directed 'em to such use of their rational faculties employed in contemplating the works of nature as would lead 'em to the true notion of him. He has corrected, by setting before mens eyes the natural notions they have of God as creator and governor of the world, the corruptions which negligence and vice had introduced ; he has given the clearest and fullest view of the perfections of God, of his providence, and the various methods of it perfectly agreeable to our natural notions of things ; and this is a great help and assistance to our reason in the discovery of the true foundation on which these principles are to be laid. He has given a full discovery of our natural duties, the notions of which were very much corrupted by the *Jews*, delivered but imperfectly in the law agreeably to the nature of the polity God then set up, which was of a worldly and temporal nature ; and not put together in one complete system, pure and unmixt, by any philosopher that had appeared in the world. And all this he confirmed by miracles, which shewed at that time to the common people the authority of God, not in a long train of reasoning, but to their very senses.

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He poured out suitable gifts on persons fitted to spread these doctrines in the world, who had a power of conferring 'em in various measures and degrees on others. These gifts *disposed* and *enabled* them to spread their religion in the world, supplied the want of acquired abilities, and shewed the wisdom and power they discovered were of God and not of men; by means of these the true worship and discipline Christ would have observed were, *as far as he designed*, settled and fix'd for all ages and nations.

2. He has revealed a-new such things, as are great helps to natural religion, but could not be discovered without the aid of revelation: As (1.) The *complete* forgiveness of our sins, or removing the *entire* punishment of sin. 'Tis probable from God's method of dealing with us, that he does not design to inflict on us the utmost punishment we might conceive due to sin. If God does not see fit to annihilate us, as perfect virtue will be complete happiness, so will imperfect virtue be imperfect happiness, and in proportion to the degrees of the virtue will be the degrees of the happiness. And by consequence, as repentance in some measure repairs the disorders in our state of virtue, so it will proportionably in that of happiness: But then that all the ill consequences of our sins shall in time be removed;

moved ; that we shall have no marks of God's displeasure, that should abate the natural rewards of virtue ; and lastly, that the grand punishment of sin, *viz.* death, shall be removed, (which is not known to be the punishment of sin by the light of nature) these things only revelation could certainly discover. (2.) God's perfect reconciliation, so as to bestow on our imperfect virtue, the reward originally due to perfect righteousness.

This one would never have expected, and indeed it would hardly be credible now it is said to be revealed, if it were not for the wise and holy manner in which we are described as coming to be partakers of this reconciliation. The Gospel represents, that God has not set aside his laws, or the sanctions of his laws ; that as death, the original designed punishment of sin, entered by the first sin of man, so life, the original designed reward of righteousness, entered through that man alone who performed complete obedience : And that as we are conformed to the first man in punishment by conformity to him in sin, we are partakers in our measure and degree of the reward of the second, by partaking in proportionable degrees of his virtue and holiness.

3. The doctrine of divine assistances, in order to perform our duty, that we should

have assistances in performance of our duty, by divine influence on our minds, appears probable from considering how difficult our combate is in the cause of virtue, how agreeable our improvements are to the divine Being, and how easily he can influence our minds, according to stated settled laws, without disturbing the present order of things; and how suitable this is to his method of governing the natural world which requires the continual interposition of his power for preserving and directing the motions of matter; and that his alike continual interpositions for assisting the minds of rational beings in the acquiring of virtue, no less suits him as the moral, than the other as the natural governor of the world, and especially since this may be done in so *easy* and *regular* a manner; that the one shall as much seem to proceed from the natural powers of our souls, as the other from the natural powers of matter: And thus the regularity and harmony of the divine government, both in the natural and moral world are admirably preserved. But then on the other hand, that besides this *ordinary* assistance God should give the gifts of the Holy Ghost to the main body of the church at first, for the enlightning 'em in such truths *as have been faithfully delivered to us*, and for the confirmation of the christian faith *both to them and us,*

*us, for the assuring the believing Gentiles in all ages* that they are children of God, and so heirs of an eternal inheritance; and thus filling their minds with peace, joy, and patience, under the severest sufferings for the sake of the Gospel, was owing to his free grace and favour, and was a dispensation of wisdom unsearchable to us.

4. Christ has discovered the *full rewards* of virtue in another world.

That virtue tends to promote happiness; that it therefore probably procures it in time; and will certainly effect it in eternity; that in the natural course of things, in exact proportion to his virtue will be the happiness of a reasonable being; that therefore even here virtue generally promotes happiness, equal degrees of virtue equal happiness, proportionable proportionable degrees; that so it should be, appears thus to be the will of the Author of nature; that however, without a constant interruption of the order of things which neither suits our idea of a wise governour, nor the methods by which God does actually govern the world; such rewards cannot be exactly adjusted to virtue here; that therefore the rewards here are but the beginnings of the recompences of virtue, that not only a particular virtuous action or two, but virtue wherever and whenever

ever practis'd, shall meet with a reward exactly proportioned to it hereafter ; since otherwise the designs of a being of perfect wisdom would be left unfinished and without producing their intire effects, all this may be learnt from the light of nature. But then in this way we can only learn the natural consequences of virtue in a future state ; as God does not *constantly* interpose here for the encouragement of virtue, so we could learn nothing of such constant interpositions in another world ; on the contrary we might from analogy argue that he would not thus *constantly* interpose ; and though as one natural effect of virtue is its influence on the favour of God, we cannot demonstrate there shall be no additional discoveries of that ; yet that there will be, or what they will be, if any, natural reason cannot discover ; as natural reason does not discover death as the punishment of sin, so neither a restoration to life as the reward of righteousness ; and as our virtue here is imperfect it cannot discover our state of trial is ended, nor point out the time when we shall be fix'd in the possession of our *full* and *final* reward.

## 2. We may consider Christ as a Priest.

Christ was obedient to death, he died to deliver us from death, as sacrifices were anciently slain in the room of the offender ; this act of his especially, as the con-

cluding and finishing part of a perfectly obedient life, was peculiarly acceptable to God, more acceptable than any sacrifices under the law could be, as performed in obedience to his will. As a testimony of his being thus accepted with him, God raised him from the dead : As his resurrection was the sign to which he appealed in his life-time for the proof of his mission, if he had not been raised from the dead he must have been an impostor, and his pretended act of obedience in submitting to death not at all acceptable to God. Being raised from the dead he ascended into heaven, and was so highly advanced there as to receive full power of bestowing all those blessings on us, we are rendered meet to receive, by those good dispositions which prayer to God has a tendency to discover and promote. And now this account shews why Christ is represented dying as a sacrifice ; why so much stress is in some places laid on his death, and yet in others even greater on his resurrection ; how he is said to be consecrated a Priest at his resurrection, and why he is represented as entering with his blood into the heavens to make an atonement for us there ; as the High Priest entered with the blood of the sacrificed beast into the Holy of Holies to make an atonement for the people of *Israel*. Death entered by sin ;

life

life was to re-enter by righteousness; therefore through Christ only, whose whole life was without stain, and whose obedience to death was a complete discovery of an intire conquest of sin, *Rom.* viii. 3.

Thus there was a perfect expiation of sin; God discovered a becoming regard to the honour of his laws and government, his equal and steady government not dropping the sanctions of his laws, and therefore not suffering life to enter till righteousness, to which it was annexed as a reward, had entered also; thus setting a perfect example of virtue and of the reward of it, and yet encouraging our imperfect virtue, by bestowing as a reward of the perfect virtue of Christ, a power to bestow degrees of happiness in a future life on us, proportioned to our virtue here \*.

This is the account the Scripture gives us of Christ's Priesthood, and in this we may see the following instances of wisdom.

\* Christ's Priesthood is all along represented after the manner of the Levitical Priesthood; thus he is described as appearing in the presence of God for us, as the High Priest presented before God the blood of the sacrificed beast in the Holy of Holies; and in allusion to the same Priesthood, it seems to me that our Saviour is described as interceding for us; whereas in other places it is clearly represented, that he had by his obedient sufferings obtained the full power of bestowing all suitable blessings on his people, and so needed not continually to renew his prayers for a power already given him.

(1.) In God's appointing so excellent a person as his own Son for this purpose, by which he more effectually discovers his hatred of sin and regard to the honour of his laws and government on the one hand, and his love to sinners on the other.

(2.) In his appointing a man to expiate for the sins of men, on which the Apostle seems to lay great stress, *Rom.* v. and *Heb.* ii. and no wonder, since thus all the wise ends mentioned above were answered, which could not be by the sacrifices of beasts, which could not therefore take away sin, nor fully represent that sacrifice which did ; but only as they were appointed of God, led mens thoughts to some more perfect expiation he would in time appoint (though what it should be they could not tell) by which this design of accepting an atonement for the sins of men God has imperfectly discovered, shall be fully and completely executed, as the shadow cast by a luminous body, does not represent the luminous body, like an image formed by it ; but only discovers that some luminous body there is : See the intire 9th Chap. to the *Hebrews* and beginning of the 10th.

(3.) In God's representing to us the new covenant as founded in Christ's blood, whereby vast encouragement is given us, and great aid to our weakness, as in another

ther case by God's adding the security of his oath to his promise.

(4.) By Christ's being represented always in heaven in the presence of God, interceding for us with him, which is a great help to our weakness ; though it be certainly true that God is ever of himself disposed to give us those good things he sees fit for us, in that way he sees best.

3. Christ is represented as a King ; while on earth he acted as a prophet, and revealed the will of God, but after his resurrection, he was made head over all, angels and men. He then sent down the gifts of the Holy Ghost as marks of royalty ; the Apostles were eminently indued with these gifts, and thus qualified to be the prime ministers in Christ's kingdom. Christ now over-rules all things for the good of his Church ; and will at length set up a glorious, peaceful, and prosperous and holy kingdom over all nations, before the conclusion of which he will raise the dead, judge every one according to his works, and then deliver up the kingdom to the Father.

Now in this account of Christ's kingdom we may observe the following instances of wisdom.

(1.) In the appointment of the person to be the Lord and Judge of all ; him who by his knowledge and power is fitted to manage

manage all affairs of the world, and by the dignity of his nature and his near relation to God might add authority to all his laws ; him whose government is recommended by the most endearing consideration of his having voluntarily given up himself to death for us, to obtain this propriety in us, and in whose direction of all affairs for our good we may rest with the greatest security ; by intrusting whom with the management of all affairs, and particularly the determining our final state, our regards to him are secured and our hope in God strengthned ; a suitable reward is bestowed on his extraordinary virtue, one is appointed to be our judge, who as man can become visible to us, and as Mediator is fitted to judge all according to his own merciful law.

(2.) In the frame of Christ's laws, which are all founded in truth and reason ; if it were, as has been shewn, reasonable for God to appoint a Mediator, then it must be reasonable, when there is such an appointment, to acknowledge it and behave suitably to it ; for it is a law of reason to behave suitably in all the circumstances in which we are placed ; though therefore natural reason could not discover a Mediator, yet when the appointment of him is discovered, all those actions by which there is expressed a becoming sense of such appointment

ment appear reasonable, and therefore it appears reasonable that in our prayers and thanksgivings we should express our receiving our blessings through the hands of this Mediator God has appointed, especially considering that this tends to promote that fear of sinning, and humility on the one hand, and that steady hope and trust in God on the other, for advancing which excellent ends God is supposed to have appointed a Mediator.

(3.) In the account we have of this Judgment, that at the conclusion of this Scene of things, when God's providences towards the inhabitants of our earth are closed up, when there has been sufficient trial of the virtue of all, there should be a review of our actions, that they should be all, at a certain appointed time, called over and solemnly accounted for; and thus the wisdom, justice and goodness of God in all his past and future dealings with men fully cleared up, before all men are to receive from the appointed judge their full and final rewards, seems very agreeable to natural reason. That this should be done with the solemnities described in the New Testament, so apt to strike our imaginations and move our passions, the great springs of actions, seems also no less agreeable to the wisdom of God's government; and one considerable part of this, *viz.* the burning up this

earth for the punishment of the wicked is agreeable to God's past proceeding in destroying the old earth by water, and to a tradition that has had a very large spread among the *Heathens*. That there should be a solemn fixed time of considerable length appointed for this, seems to follow naturally from the supposition of there being such a judgment of all ; if this judgment be nothing else but mens appointment to the respective recompences of their actions, that requires no length of time nor solemnity of proceeding at all : But if there be such a solemn judgment that bears some resemblance to such proceedings amongst us, as the Scripture plainly supposes, it must take up considerable time ; God can do things in an instant, as in making or drowning our earth ; but if he works in a natural way, as he seems represented to have done in both these actions, he must be a considerable time in performing them. Natural reason shews the necessary consequences of virtue and vice in eternity, and these consequences as arising from the will of the author of nature ; but this won't affect so much the common people, as they won't easily be satisfied of the necessary consequence of things in eternity, when they do not see it in time, and will want some plain discoveries of the favour and wrath of God.

To

To affect them religion must be brought down to their senses and imaginations, and stir their passions, to which ends nothing can be better adapted than the Scripture account of the future judgment. And the knowledge of such a judgment as this is wholly owing to revelation, and came to the *Gentiles* wholly by the Gospel revelation, according to the Apostle's account, *Acts xvii. 31.*

*Coroll. 1.* We see the true notion of Christianity, *viz.* natural religion revived, cleared, improved, strengthened and assisted by farther discoveries beyond what reason could give, which guards against two extremes of making Christianity wholly contrary to, or at least independent on natural religion, or making it nothing else but natural religion revived.

*Coroll. 2.* We see how excellently Christianity suits our natural notions of a revelation, *viz.* as clearing and strengthning the principles and motives of natural religion, and superadding such discoveries as do enlarge the minds of all, furnish with new motives to the practice of holiness, and are particularly adapted to assist the weakness of the bulk of mankind, and in a manner suited to their capacities and circumstances, direct and influence them in the particulars of their duty.

## C H A P. V.

*Of the internal evidence for Christianity, as compared with former revelations.*

**I**N considering this argument, I shall 1. take a view of Christianity in its relation to former revelations, and consider it as the perfection of 'em, and compleating their design as it pretends to do. 2. As it is in itself in all the several parts of it, tending to promote an end worthy of God.

1. Then, I shall consider Christianity in the relation it bears to former revelations.

(1.) 'Tis a thing credible in it self ; that a being of perfect knowledge and goodness, should make various revelations of his will to such weak and ignorant creatures as we, according to our various exigencies.

(2.) That something should be revealed to us which we could not otherwise have known, but which is of great use as a means to promote holiness, and which when revealed approves it self to our strictest reason.

(3.) Such a revelation is that concerning eternal life as the reward of righteousness; death is that which all dread as the sum of natural

natural evils which we here feel, to which they all lead, and in which they end, and life is what we all desire ; we find at present that the exercise of our powers, and our perception of pleasure depends on the temperament of the body, and tho' this temperament be not always the most happy, which therefore we can't but wish altered ; yet as we seem of that order of beings whose operations are not wholly independent on matter ; and as we find by experience our happiness at present depends much on the bodily frame, we can't but desire the continuance of the union between the soul and body disposed so, as in the best manner to be instrumental to it in its operations and perceptions of pleasure, or if it be discontinued, to have it restored to this state ; and therefore the Apostle describes even the Heathens as groaning after eternal life, because, tho' they had no notice of a resurrection, yet they naturally desired those blessings which really belong only to those that are the children of God, by being children of the resurrection. *Rom.* viii. 19.

This eternal life could not be known without a revelation.

Death is the natural consequence of the make of our bodies, and can be prevented only by the will of God ordering it otherwise ; which will of God, since we don't

know the motives that determine it, must be unknown to us.

But when revelation has made known this, it appears most reasonable; for what can be more fit than that natural evils, and so death, the sum of 'em, should be the effect of moral evil; and that life, the sum of natural blessings, should be the consequence of moral good?

(4.) This revelation of eternal life was first made to *Adam* in Paradise.

There was a particular command given him to abstain from the fruit of one tree in the garden which was in its own nature hurtful to him, on pain of death. This shews that perfect righteousness would have procured him eternal life; the threatening of death to sin, implying the promise of life to righteousness. This law was given him by way of tryal, and the propereft tryal in the world it was of his submission to God's wisdom, and the subjection of his appetites to reason, which two dispositions lead to the practice of all virtue. He sinned by suffering his appetites to prevail so far as to render him inattentive to the reasons which would have shewn him, that the doing of what he had so great evidence of God's having forbidden him, could never procure him the means of attaining happiness, and avoiding misery.

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Now as this law was given by way of trial of virtue, 'tis plain that eternal life could only belong to *Adam*, if he had been virtuous in every other instance as well as that of obedience to this law; that death then must be the wages of every sin, and eternal life only the reward of perfect righteousness.

(5.) After the fall this life was forfeited, but God gives some hopes of a restoration to it by promising, that mankind should at last prevail over that species of creatures the serpent, or those superior beings, whose head or chief now appeared in the form of a serpent, and by thus putting on the appearance of a divine messenger pretending to explain farther a command before received, deceived our first parents, and brought sin and death into the world. The promise therefore of mankind's at last bruising his head, the seat and the emblem of power, seems to imply the defeating his design of bringing on them eternal death, and destroying his mortal power by the introduction of life by righteousness.

These hopes were kept alive by expiatory sacrifices, which I seem an appointment of God, to shew the desert of sin, to give persons the first notion of death, to shew that God was not wholly implacable, and by thus reprieving life, to give some faint hopes of a restoration to eternal life; from

these imperfect expiations to lead to the expectation of some perfect expiation to be appointed in time by that Being whose wise designs are ever executed, and whose works are never imperfect.

(6.) God's expressing in the early ages of the world his distinguishing regard to the virtuous as in the case of *Abel*, and yet not distinguishing 'em by his favours in this life, led men naturally to expect 'em in another world.

(7.) The covenant of temporal blessings with *Noah* would easily be considered as a pledge of eternal ones ; the removing one part of the original curse, *viz.* that on the ground, naturally leading men to hope it was God's design in time to remove the whole curse, and so that of death on man.

(8.) For a reward of *Abraham's* extraordinary faith, God promised to bless him in so eminent a manner, that he should be the pattern of blessing to all nations, *Gen. xii. 3.* after whose example, when they wished happiness for themselves or others, they should desire to be blessed. *Abraham* might easily understand from the event that this was not to be understood of any extraordinary temporal blessings, neither could he apprehend temporal blessings to be the complete rewards of that obedience God was pleased to accept ; afterwards God (*Gen. xv. 6.*) fully explains this, when he ac-

counted faith to him for righteousness, i. e. declared his acceptance of his faith, so as to give him a title thereby to life, the reward of righteousness.

And when *Gen. xvii.* he promises to *Abraham* and his seed, i. e. those of them that were imitators of his faith, as *Isaac* was, *Gen. xxi. 12. Chap. xvii. 19, 20, 21. Rom. ix. 7.* to be their God, the import of this promise is that he would bestow on them the reward originally due by God's promise to righteousness, *viz.* eternal life, which since death now by God's appointment passes on all, must include a resurrection to that life. And this is the argument for the resurrection our Saviour urges against the *Sadduces*, *Luke xx. 37, 38.* Jehovah was the God of the *faithful Patriarchs*, therefore of *all* the faithful, i. e. their governour and rewarder, i. e. the bestower of eternal life on them, i. e. the raiser of them to life, since, according to the general law of nature, they die as others do; God is not the God of the dead, i. e. of those that die so as not to live again; the Patriarchs therefore, though at the time God declared himself to *Moses* to be their God, they were dead *to the world*, yet were *alive* to God, as it lay within the power of God to raise them to life when he pleased, and therefore God might be said to be their God, i. e. their rewarder or the bestower

bestower of eternal life on them, though at that time they were dead, just as *Abraham* is said by the Apostle to be the father of us all; *Gentiles* as well as *Jews* that believe, in the sight of God, *who quickneth the dead and calleth those things that be not as tho' they were*, Rom. iv. 16, 17. \*

*Abraham*

\* The word *God* in Scripture is a relative term, and signifies dominion and authority, and on this account, those that are like *God* in dominion, as *Adam* in innocence was, Gen. i. 26, 27. *Luke* iii. 38. and the *faithful* since that are intitled to an eternal life with glory and dominion, are called sons of *God*, i. e. such as are like *God*; to be the *God* of any person or people, therefore, is to have dominion over them, which is acknowledged by worship; *civil*, when their dominion is *visible*; *religious*, when the dominion is *invisible*. Thus the several *invisible* beings that were *imagined* by the *Heathens* to have dominion over them were *called* by them *Gods*, though really because they had no such dominion they were *no Gods*.

Thus Angels, who before the coming of Christ really had dominion over the several countries of the earth, are called *Gods by the spirit of God in Scripture*; and in like manner are earthly magistrates: *Jehovah* is the most High, above all *Gods*; *Jehovah* is the *God* of all reasonable beings; but he is in a peculiar manner the *God* of those that own his authority, and submit to his government, and claim the privileges of faithful subjects.

Thus in the revolt of the world from *Jehovah* to idols, he was peculiarly the *God* of *Abraham* and his seed; afterwards, in a more distinguishing manner, he is declared to be the *God* of his seed by *Isaac* and *Jacob*; in process of time these became a nation, and *God* settled a polity among them, and governed them in a *visible* manner, as other nations were ruled by earthly governors; he gave them a body of laws suited to their particular national constitution with temporal sanctions; but as *God* was thus the *visible* and temporal governour of *Israel*, as a nation; so he was, at the same time, *their spiritual* governour, by *spiritual* laws, with their *eternal* sanctions, which they professed subjecton to, as no other nation in the earth did; and in a peculiar manner, the *spiritual* governour of those good men amongst them, that *really* submitted to the *spiritual* government of *God*. In this sense it was that *God* was the *God* of the Patriarchs; *God* is not a mere temporal governour; his laws

are

*Abraham* then was set forth as the great exemplar of faith, and of the reward God graciously designed it, viz. eternal life ;

are spiritual, and their sanctions *eternal* ; and when God made his promises to the Patriarchs, he was not a *temporal* King to any. Promises are to be taken in the most extensive sense, where there is nothing in the nature of the thing, or in the context, &c. to limit them. The promise then of being the God of the Patriarchs is most naturally understood of his being their *eternal* rewarder.

*Jehovah* is said to be their God on account of their faith and obedience, i. e. on account of their unfeigned submission to the *spiritual* government of God, and so being intituled to its *eternal* blessings ; God counted faith to them for righteousness, i. e. so as to intitle them to the reward of righteousness, *eternal* life ; God did not bestow on them distinguishing temporal blessings; such as the possession of *Canaan*, in which they were but strangers and pilgrims, *Heb.* xi. 9, 13. When God promises to be the God of *Abraham* and his seed, this covenant is expressly said to be made with *Isaac* and his seed, i. e. with the imitators of *Abraham's* faith, in express contradistinction to the natural seed of *Abraham* that were not imitators of his faith, as *Ishmael*, *Gen.* xvii. 19, 20, 21. xxi. 9, 10, 12, 13. and lastly, with the promise of being the God of *Abraham* and his seed, is joined, that of giving *Canaan* for an everlasting inheritance, which shews plainly that the promise belongs not to *Abraham's natural seed, as such*, for then *Ishmael* and *Esau* had been intituled to it ; nor to any part of *Abraham's* natural seed, but as *imitators of his faith* ; and therefore the *Israelites* have forfeited this blessing by their infidelity ; and will be restored to it in the latter days only on their returning to the imitation of faithful *Abraham*, *2 Sam.* vii. 10. *Ezek.* xxxvii: *Isaiah* lx. 19, to the end ; lxv. 17, 18, 19. lxvi. 22, *Jer.* xxxi. 31,—35. If we carry our inquiries so far as the New Testament, we shall find, that as Christ alone was perfectly obedient to the will of God, and so had alone a right to *eternal* life, the reward of righteousness ; *Jehovah* is said in a peculiar manner to be his God as well as Father ; and thus, in a lower sense, he is called the God of all that by faith are, through Christ, entitled to *eternal* life, and in some places he is represented, as the God of the *whole body of professed* believers, just as he was of the *whole Jewish nation* formerly, because they only, of all the nations of the earth, *professed* subjection to *Jehovah*, the creator of heaven and earth.

upon the last and fullest discovery of *Abraham's* faith in offering up his son, God promised that his seed should in like manner be such an example of blessedness as he was ; how this was to be, perhaps *Abraham* could not at first understand ; but since prophecies and the event have explained it to mean, that as death entered by the sin of one man, so one man of *Abraham's* seed should be intitled to life by righteousness, and thus should be to all, the pattern and exemplar of righteousness, and of the reward of it, which reward God is graciously pleased to bestow on those who are conformed to his righteousness by sincerity.

(9.) As a farther reward of *Abraham's* extraordinary faith, to preserve the pure worship of God in the world, and the tradition of that eminent person who was to bring life, God separated some of *Abraham's* posterity ; promised them a fruitful country for their habitation ; gave them the visible symbols of his presence ; settled a body of laws with proper temporal sanctions ; and these to be executed by proper ministers of his appointment ; and lastly, from time to time, raised up those who should keep alive the great promise of *Abraham's* seed, and farther explain it. See an excellent account of the *Jewish* constitution

tution in the late essay on the several dispensations of God to mankind, pag. 35.

(10.) The law of *Moses* was in all its parts fitted to answer the great end of revelation. It shewed what is the consequence of sin, and what of righteousness, by threatening death to the one and promising life to the other ; in this way indeed it could not confer life, which if it had done it had been contrary to the *Abrahamick* covenant, which promised life to *all nations on the condition of faith* : It thus convinced of sin, and led men to expect life in the way of faith in which it was before promised to *Abraham*, and to wait for the more full discovery of this life by that seed of *Abraham*, which was, as the prophecies given from time to time to the *Jewish Church* did gradually explain, to bring it into the world.

The expiations of the law, shewed men the desert of sin, represented God to them as not absolutely implacable, and led them to the hopes of some perfect expiation, they could not tell what, but such as God's wisdom should pitch on for the complete expiation of all sin whatever.

To those who have seen the last revelation of God's will, and discern how it is the completion of all his former revelations ; how many things there are in it agreeing with former revelations, and that show

shew a reasonableness in some former institutions which otherwise appear trifling, there appears a moral fitness in many appointments of *Moses*, the reasons of which the *Israelites* at that time could have no notion of. In order to preserve the *Israelites* from falling into the corruptions of other nations, it was necessary they should have laws given them that should by prescribing different methods of eating and drinking, &c. by rites, as circumcision, that would make them ridiculous or odious to other nations, keep them a separate and distinct people ; and especially that by prescribing different and opposite rites to those of the neighbour nations in their worship, should preserve them from mixing with them in their idolatries ; these laws must be suited to their particular genius and constitution ; and in order to preserve so stubborn a people within some bounds, must make some indulgences to them ; as in prescribing a pompous ceremonial worship, allowing divorce, &c. As they were under the peculiar government of God, considered as a nation, and as God governed (like earthly kings) by proper ministers, whom he endowed with no supernatural gifts to enable them to discover who had the principles of virtue or vice, and deserved the different rewards of the one or the other, which indeed it was not

not proper should be distributed in this life ; so these laws must chiefly relate to overt-acts, and those respecting either the homage to be paid to God, their king, or a suitable behaviour towards the *Israelites* their fellow subjects : But these wise and good men, under the law of *Moses*, could not but conclude, that there was a law of reason antecedent to this of *Moses*, which prescribed to the thoughts as well as the outward actions, which was universal, and the sanctions of which could not be fully executed in this life, and the *Mosaick* constitution would help such considerate persons to the more perfect discovery of this universal spiritual law, and its sanctions.

The *Jewish* government, tho' in some measure like that of other nations, differs in this material point, viz. that God is the head of that society, in a peculiar manner. Now, tho' for wise reasons the main body of the laws he prescribes must relate to the external actions, and their sanctions must be temporal ; yet these who are under this *peculiar* law of God, must be considered as under the law of reason, which is God's *general law*, and they can't be supposed intituled to the favour of God, if they allow themselves in the breach of that law in any instance, tho' they should perfectly comply with the other; just as *Adam* would not have been intituled to eternal life, if

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he had failed in the breach of the law of reason in any instance, tho' he had complied with that particular positive law that was given him. The law of *Moses* helps to the knowledge of the law of nature, by giving us the general heads of our duty, respecting God and our neighbour; to which others may be reduced by parity of reason, which the law of reason (which we are under to God antecedently to any positive law, and which this particular positive law calls us to attend to,) lays us under an obligation of endeavouring to attain the knowledge of, and forming our practice accordingly. The law of *Moses*, by prescribing to the thoughts in some particular instances, leads us to attend to the reasons which are equally strong for our government of them in all cases; by giving us such general principles as the love of God and our neighbour, from which our whole duty may be deduced, it excites us to the making that proper use of our reason.

By threatening death to sin, and promising life to righteousness, it keeps alive on men's minds the sense of the original positive sanctions of God's law, which the *Heathens* were necessarily unacquainted with.

By resolving the obligation of all moral virtues directly into the authority of God, it kept alive a sense of that upon men's minds, which those among the *Heathens*,  
who

who had gone farthest in showing the reasonableness of virtue, seem to have had but little notion of.

By representing the natural consequences of virtue and vice as proceeding from the will of God, since the one was made the subject of promise, the other of threatenings, it kept alive on men's minds the sense of God as the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and since it appears that these are not *equally* nor *completely* executed in this life, it taught 'em to look for another.

As their reason taught them that God was the Governor of the world by a law with spiritual sanctions, as well as of one particular people, by a law with temporal sanctions; so the execution of the latter, by proper ministers appointed for that purpose, led them to expect the alike execution of the former, when God saw fit and proper that it should be done, which 'tis evident can't be, completely, in this life.

Before the law there was the *Abrahamick* covenant, which promised eternal life to faith: This then naturally led them to think, that tho' as they broke the law they could not be free from that death which sin first introduced, and ever since continued in the world; yet that the promise of life made to *Abraham*, and in him, to all the faithful, should be fulfilled in the resurrection of all the faithful (even tho', like *Abraham*, they

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had in some instances broken the law of God that they were under) to an eternal life of happiness: Had the knowledge of eternal life, which the *Abrahamick* covenant thus furnished the *Israelites* with, directed them to their spiritual duties of self-denial, heavenly-mindedness, &c. See the Essay on the several dispensations, p. 31.

*Corol.* From what has been said under this head, we may see how to reconcile the different and seemingly opposite accounts of the law, both in the old and new Testament.

Thus we understand how our Saviour, *Mat.* xix. comes to promise the young man eternal life on obedience to the law, refering him for the knowledge of the terms of life, to the ten commandments, and directing him, by his explication of the last of them, to the observing the obligation he was under, as a reasonable creature, to exercise a due government over his thoughts at all times, and not merely to abstain from injuring his neighbour in the particular instances mentioned, but to do good to him in all instances whatever.

Thus we see how Christ, in his discourse on the mount, very wisely corrects the mistakes of the *Jews* in his time, who regarded only temporal laws and temporal sanctions, and directs them to those spiritual precepts,

precepts, with their spiritual sanctions, which would approve themselves to their uncorrupted reason, extending, by a parity of reason, the law which prescribed the curbing some irregular appetites to an obligation to the subduing all. Thus St. Paul's different accounts of the law, as witnessing to the doctrine of faith, and yet prescribing perfect works as the term of life; as carnal, consisting of carnal ordinances, and yet spiritual, shewing him, that desires of evil were sinful; and lastly, as promising eternal life, and yet having sanctions of a temporal nature, are easily reconciled together.

## ( 11.) The

'Tis plain that St. Paul sometimes in his discourses concerning justification, does not merely understand the political law of the *Jews*, but a positive law, threatening death to sin. According to the apostle, sin is not imputed where there is no such positive law. 'Tis this which gives sin its value, as it were, assigning the punishment which is due to it.

The original law, which assigned the due punishment of sin, was the law given to *Adam*; and by this law, all from *Adam* to *Moses* died, even tho' they had not sinned like *Adam*, i. e. by the breach of a positive law, threatening death. The law of *Moses* threatened violent death, either by God's own hands immediately, or by the hands of the magistrate, considered as his minister, to all the breakers of it. This law of *Moses* was not the original law, in consequence of which men die; for all died from *Adam* to *Moses*; and tho' persons, by offering the appointed sacrifices, were secured from that violent death which was threatened by the law of *Moses*; yet still they must (as the Apostle often observes) die as *sinners*, in consequence of the law threatening death to sin, i. e. the original law given to *Adam*; the sense of which *Moses*'s law, by the threatening of death to every breach of it, and by the substitution of sacrifices, which represents the desert of sin, served to revive on the minds of men.

(11.) The prophets were raised up in the *Jewish* church to enforce the obligations of morality; to keep alive the sense of the *Abrahamick* covenant; to reprove the nation,

See *Rom.* ii. 12, 13, 14, 15. *iii.* 20, 21, 22, 23, 27, 28, 31. *iv.* 15. *v.* 13. *vii.* 9. *viii.* 4. *Gal.* iii. 12. *Gal.* v. 3, 4, 5.

This may serve to reconcile the differences of learned men, concerning the law of *Moses*, and St. Paul's reasonings about justification.

'Tis evident the law of *Moses* is a political law, and thus the main precepts of it must be external, and the promises and threatenings temporal; but then there is this difference between the *Jewish* polity and all others, that their government was a theocracy.

Now 'tis certain, that God is the Governor of all reasonable creatures, by the law of reason, and the natural consequences of obedience or disobedience to that law, for as long time as our existence continues; he must then be the spiritual as well as temporal Governor of the *Israelites*. The main body of the *Jewish* laws were of an external nature; and as political laws, they allowed somethings to the *Jews*, that were contrary to the law of nature; i. e. they did not punish such crimes, with the death threatened to others. But still, as the *Jews* were under the law of nature, they were obliged to every thing their reason taught them to be good, whether expressed in the law or no; they were under the same law of nature with others, and were helped to discover this, by the general laws of nature expressed in the law, by particular laws, to which others might be reduced by parity of reason, &c. but still their obligation to obey those laws which their reason thus deduced from the others, arises only from the obligation they, with all the rest of mankind, are under to obey reason.

The *Jewish* law was of a political nature; but as it was a law of God, a positive law of God (like that to *Adam*) declaring death to be the wages of sin, the Apostle describes the righteousness of the law, or that way of justification by perfect unfinning obedience, which was revealed to *Adam*, in language borrowed from the law of *Moses*; but then on the other hand, as the law also provided the remedy of sacrifices for sins that were not presumptuous, and promised to the people of *Israel* the blessings of the land of *Canaan*, to sincere obedience to the law, here was some shadow of the grace of the *Gospel*. The imperfect

tion, or the heads of it, when they were gone into great corruptions in principle or practice; to instruct them in the preference of moral duty to ceremonial observances, which

perfect expiations of the law were a shadow of the perfect expiation of the Gospel: Their expiations of political guilt were a shadow of the Gospel expiation of moral guilt; and the promises of temporal blessings on *sincere* obedience to the law of *Moses* made to the *people of Israel*, were a shadow of the spiritual and eternal blessings made to every particular person *sincerely* obeying the Gospel; and therefore the Apostle, as he sometimes illustrates the terms of the original law of works, by the descriptions given of the law of *Moses*, as threatening death to every sin; so at other times he *illustrates* the method of justification, by faith or sincere obedience, by such passages of the law, as promise the *blessings* of *Canaan* to the *people of Israel*, on their repentance: And this last method he fully shews to be the way in which God designs to justify persons, from the *Abrahamick* covenant, prior to, and wholly distinct from the *Sinai* covenant, and from many express declarations scattered up and down thro' the Old Testament. See *Gal.* iii. 12. *Rom.* x. 5, --- 10.

The plain truth of the case is this: The law of *Moses*, as the Apostle shews in many places, particularly in his Epistle to the *Hebrews*, contained only temporal promises; but then as the *Jews*, at that time, expected eternal life for those observances of the law, to which only temporal blessings in *Canaan* were affixed; to set these men right, the Apostle shews, that even supposing it were granted them, that *eternal* life were to be had by observances of the law, it must be only when they were *perfect*, since the law lay all under a curse that did not perfectly fulfil it. And this, I apprehend, is the Apostle's reasoning in the Epistles to the *Romans* and *Galatians*; but in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, in describing the excellency of the Gospel beyond the law, he represents the promises of the one as temporal, the other as spiritual and eternal; and the sacrifices which established the *Mosaick* covenant, as only cleansing from ceremonial or political guilt, whilst the sacrifice of Christ, which established the Gospel covenant, cleanses also from moral guilt, and procures *eternal* redemption, *good things to come*.

The reason why he does not meddle with this latter branch of argument in the Epistles to the *Romans* and *Galatians*, which treat of the method of justification, I take to be this: He is shewing, particularly in the Epistle to the *Romans*, how all are

which the multitude of ceremonies of the law would naturally lead them to lay too great stress on ; to keep them steady to the worship of one God, by showing in their predictions, (all which had their accomplishments) their happiness or misery, as they obeyed or disobeyed his laws ; and in their predictions of miseries to the worshippers of other gods, that the God of *Israel* was superior to all other deities ; and that their happiness depended wholly on him ; and as these were such things as the diviners of the *Heathens* could not foretel, this preserved them from running after them, and so falling in with their idolatrous worship ; and lastly, to keep alive the memory of the promise to *Abraham* concerning his seed ; that was to bring life into the world, and to open more fully the design of his coming.

The schools of the prophets seem erected for these purposes, to oppose corruptions generally spreading in the nation, and especially among the heads of it, and to be dispersed into all parts of *Judæa*, as God

now to be justified in the method of faith which the Gospel proposes : None can be justified any other way, since all have sinned. Now a law, given from the very beginning of the world, and concerning all indifferently in all parts of the earth, has fix'd the punishment of sin, *viz.* death : And this original sanction of God's law, the law of *Moses* has revived, by threatening death to every breach of that law. Thus the Apostle shews there is no justification for any *Jew* or *Gentile* but by *faith* ; whereas if he had considered the latter branch of the argument, he had given a direct answer to the *Jews*, but none at all to the *Gentiles*.

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saw fit, to instruct men in the several points of morality, with good reason and sufficient authority; as the priests were dispersed into all parts for spreading the knowledge, and promoting the practice of the ceremonial law.

*Coral.* From what has been said under this head, we may see the reasonableness of the prophets being appointed sometimes, not only to foretel the greater events of nations and kingdoms, but the lesser events relating to particular persons; because, by this means, the *Israelites* were preserved from running after the diviners of the *Heathens*, who pretended to foretel such things as these.

(12.) And lastly, Christianity is the perfection of all these former revelations; it explains and opens the design of the law; it shews the wise reasons for God's giving this law of peculiarity; it gives a very rational account of God's altering his method of acting, according to the different state of things, and shews one uniform design steadily pursued, tho' in different methods; it represents God always shewing a distinguishing regard to the righteous: On this account, bestowing peculiar favours on *Abraham*, and for the preservation of his true worship and virtue, and the knowledge of one that was to be an universal blessing, separating his posterity from the rest of the world for a time, but

from the beginning predicting a time, when the enclosure should be broken down, and the *Gentiles* be taken into his kingdom: The accomplishment of this was shewn in the Gospel which was preached to every creature under heaven; and thus the *Abrahamick* covenant, which had been farther confirmed by the death of Christ, was made of the most extensive usefulness, being revealed to all whom it concerned. Christ, by his moral precepts, perfected the main design of the law, *viz.* the promoting the love of God and our neighbour. By his obedience to death he perfected the design of all the expiations of the law. The resemblance between his and the *Mosaick* institution, shew one uniform design of God in both, and the disparity in some cases (which is ever to the advantage of the Gospel) shew this to be the perfection of former revelations. Lastly, in him were accomplished all the prophecies concerning the seed of *Abraham*, to bring life into the world, that were to be accomplished at his first coming; and the accomplishment of these, together with his miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost exercised by his immediate followers, are so many earnests of the accomplishment of the rest.

## C H A P. VI.

*An answer to an objection against both the Abrahamick and Mosaick revelations, as contradicting the law of nature.*

Obj. I. **A**GAINST the *Abrahamick* revelation, from the command to *Abraham* to offer up his son, which is contrary (1.) to the moral fitness of things; (2.) to the will of God, as appears afterwards from God's not suffering it to be executed. To the first part of the objection, I answer, that there were reasons why *Isaac* should not be offered up; but still it was not contrary to the law of nature, for *Abraham* circumstanced as he was to be ready to offer him up. *Abraham* denied indeed his natural love to his child, as Christians do their natural love to life, when they part with it for their religion; but in this he did not act against truth, since he acted as a being should do, with inclination, but a principle of reason also to direct it right.

*Abraham* must know, that if he sacrificed his son, God would raise him up again, since otherwise God could not fulfil his promise,

promise, in which, 'tis plain, *Abraham* firmly believed; and this conditional assurance, which he had of a resurrection, would answer to him all objections against the moral fitness of the thing required: As,

(1.) If it be said this would disgrace *Abraham's* religion. *Ans.* No; since it appears there was no want of natural affection in *Abraham*; he had a divine command for what he did, as the resurrection of *Isaac* would shew.

(2.) If it be objected, that this would encourage human sacrifices. *Ans.* No; since no man could, with any colour of reason, pretend, from the example of *Abraham*, a right to offer up a man in sacrifice, except he could also, by the event, shew he had from God a promise of a resurrection.

(3.) If it be objected, that the taking away the life of an innocent person is prejudicial to society. *Ans.* Not; if such a person were soon to be raised again: It must be owned, that where there has been one such case warranted by a divine command, there might afterwards be very hurtful pretensions made to such a command; but that can be no more an argument against this particular revelation, than against any revelation whatever, which may occasion, tho' not cause, very hurtful impostures to arise in the world; and when a government

ment is not very much disordered indeed, the ill effects of such impostures may easily be prevented.

(4.) If it be pretended, that then God could not fulfil his promise to *Abraham* without a miracle. *Ans.* This is no objection, if there were sufficient reasons to expect such a miracle. (1.) Then God, by suffering *Abraham* to go so far as to sacrifice his son, which would require a miracle e'er the promise could be fulfilled, would set before men an eminent instance of a firm dependence on his power and faithfulness. (2.) He would give an instance of one risen from the dead, and so facilitate the belief of the grand Article of the *Abrahamick* religion, *viz.* eternal life. (3.) He would give farther assurance to *Abraham* and to all that became acquainted with his history, of the fulfilment of all his most important promises to *Abraham*, relating to the seed of this son of his, which promises therefore are very fitly renewed to *Abraham* on this occasion.

2. As to the other part of the objection, *viz.* that *Abraham's* offering up his son, was contrary to God's will, who afterwards forbid it; so that this story is inconsistent with it self. I answer, that this was not an *absolute*, but only a *conditional* command, and amounts to thus much, *Do thou this, if I don't afterwards signify my will to the contrary.* Those things that appear morally fit,

fit, reason shews us to be the will of God we should do ; those things that *appear* morally unfit, reason shews it is God's will we should avoid ; those things that to our reason appear *indifferent*, our reason shews us *may* be the subjects of a divine command. If they *really* are fit to be done, it is God's *absolute* will they should be done ; if they *really* are not, it may be God's will they should be done ; *on condition* he does not afterwards signify it to be his will they should not.

These last therefore are the proper subjects of a *probatory* command, or a command by which our readiness to do God's will, even against our own inclinations, and to submit to his wisdom even when the reason of things does not appear, may be discovered to the great advantage of mankind. That the command to *Abraham* was of this nature, seems plainly implied in the very words in which it is expressed, God tempted *Abraham*, and said, &c. and *Abraham* himself seems to be aware that it *might* be of that nature ; see Gen. xxii. 5, 8, 14. though he was not *sure* but that it might be God's *absolute* will, and therefore his firm and neverfailing support could be taken from nothing but God's power to raise *Isaac* from the dead, as the Apostle well argues ; I will only add

add farther, this hint *for the use of Christians*, viz. that our Saviour's command in the Gospels to the young man, to sell all that he had, seems of the same nature with this to *Abraham*; to be indifferent to the things of the world appears *moral-ly fit*; to part with them on this or that particular occasion *may* be God's will; if then this be signified to be God's will by one who *appears* to be a prophet of God, (just as the offering up *Isaac* was signified to be God's will to *Abraham*, in the same manner he formerly had received revelations from God) he ought to part with them, except afterwards God signifies in some way equally satisfactory with the former, that it was not his *absolute* will; as v. g. in case the same prophet should assure him the command was only given by way of tryal; and this it appears probable to me our Saviour would have done, if the young man, like *Abraham*, had complied with the *probatory* command given him.

2. The grand objection against the *Mos-  
saick* revelation is much of the same na-  
ture with the former against the *Abra-  
hamick*, viz. that it encourages human sa-  
crifices by the command given to put to  
death every devoted thing from among  
men, *Lev. xxvii. 28, 29.* to this I answer;

(1.) It cannot be supposed the meaning  
of this precept that whatever men vow to  
put

put to death, should right or wrong be put to death ; for no government in the world could subsist one moment on such a foundation as that ; and it is plain, the law of *Moses* did not give such a power even over slaves. See *Exod.* xxi. 20.

(2.) Those things are, in the language of the Old Testament, said to be devoted, which are only appointed by *God* for wise and just reasons to be destroyed, as the seven *Canaanite* nations. See *Josb.* vi. 17. *Deut.* xxv. 19. *1 Sam.* xv. 3.

(3.) If we understand this law to relate to those that are devoted by men, it may signify such as in consequence of God's appointment to ruin, they have vowed to destroy. See *Josb.* vi. 20. *Num.* xxi. 2.

## C H A P. VII.

*The internal evidences for Christianity, as considered concerning the incarnation of the Son of God.*

THAT there is and can be but *one self-existent being*, who as he is the original of all being, must be the fountain of all power and authority ; and therefore that there is and can be but *one God*, is most

most evident : but then natural reason can never shew, that there may not be an *immediate* derivation from this one self-existent being, who may be the *immediate* Creator of all things visible and invisible ; and thus of consequence possess every perfection which is necessary for the raising up the amazing fabrick of heaven and earth, and stocking it with all the vast variety of creatures that inhabit it, and who may particularly be the image of the invisible God in *his dominion and authority*, and therefore have justly the character and denomination of the only begotten Son of God, as the most perfect image of the dominion of the self-existent being. Son of God, signifies one that is like him in dominion ; thus magistrates are called sons of God ; good men, sons of God, because a kingdom is prepared for them.

The children of the resurrection are sons of God, because they inherit the kingdom prepared for them.

Christ was Son of God before his incarnation, for he was God in the beginning ; *John i. 1.* and when the *Israelites* were God's peculiar people, he was their God, and as such appeared in the form of God to them, *Comp. Heb. i. 8, 9. Phil. ii. 6.*

Moral excellencies enter into the notion of dominion as received *immediately* from

from God, and therefore in the account of Christ's sonship his holiness is taken particular notice of, *Rom.* i. 3, 4. *Luke* i. 32. He was declared Son of God at his resurrection, when he was raised to *his universal dominion*: See *Rom.* i. 3, 4. and the first to the *Hebrews* throughout. From this account of Christ's sonship; we see (1.) how Son of God and Messiah, or King of *Israel* came to be synonymous terms; (2.) how the ideas of son of God and giver of eternal life (which was one of Christ's powers, which he received from the Father: See *Jo.* xvii. 2.) came to have so close a connection in the minds of those that understood Christ's doctrine: See *Jo.* vi. 69. xi. 25, 26, 27. xx. 31. *I Joh.* iv. 9. v. 11, 12.

(3.) How the holy Spirit, notwithstanding what is said in Scripture of *his excellencies and perfections*; yet because he is, according to the *oeconomy of our redemption*, described ever as the great agent of Christ's kingdom, and not as *having a kingdom himself*, is never denominated son of God.

(4.) We may see the force of St. Paul's reasoning in the first Chapter to the *Hebrews*; he shews the pre-eminence of Christ above the Angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they, *ver. 4.* The Angels are indeed called in some places of the Old Testament,

sons of God as having dominion over particular countries : See *Dan.* x. and com. *Eph.* iv. 8. *Col.* i. 15. But no one particular Angel is called son of God by way of eminence ; or said to have the whole heathen world given him for an inheritance, v. 5. com. *Psal.* ii. 7, 8. God never said to any particular Angel, I will be to him a father, and give him an everlasting kingdom, v. 5. com. 2 *Sam.* vii. 13, 14, 15, 16. When he is again brought into the world, he is as the firstborn, commanded to be worshipped by the Angels, ver. 6. the Angels are represented as ministers, but the Son as *God* for ever, and so superior to all other powers, ver. 10. he fixed all the powers in heaven and earth, and his dominion shall continue when all others are destroyed, ver. 10, 11, 12. for he must sit at God's right-hand until all enemies are made his footstool, ver. 13. whereas the Angels are now ministering spirits even to Christ's subjects ; and among others to those very *Gentiles* over whom before they exercised dominion, ver. 14.

(5.) We may see the reason why those *Hereticks* who denied that Jesus was the Christ, separating Jesus from Christ, and who denied that Christ was come in the flesh, are said to deny the Son of God ; and why the Apostle *John* lays such a stress

on the sonship of Christ in opposition to these ; for such Persons could not possibly believe Christ's being God in the beginning, *Job.* i. 1. and the only begotten Son which was in the bosom of the Father, *Jo.* i. 18. See *John* i. 14. xx. 31. 1 *Job.* ii. 22, 23, 24. iii. 23. iv. 2, 3, 9, 10, 15. v. 1, 5, 10, 12, 13, 20. 2 *Ep.* 3, 7.

2. As to the doctrine of the incarnation, in order to shew how agreeable to reason, the Scripture account of it is, I shall lay down the following propositions.

1. As Christ represented the Father in all other perfections except self-existence, so in dominion also; therefore when the *Israelites* were God's peculiar people, he was their Governor, and when God saw fit to enlarge his kingdom , so as to take in the *Gentiles*, he was to be *Lord of all*.

2. When we had revolted from God in order to promote humility in us, and at the same time to encourage our access to him; God saw fit to appoint Christ to be the medium of conveying all blessings to us, and of our access to himself.

3. In order to this it was fit Christ should be in a suffering condition, that we might have greater encouragement in our access to God, as having an High-Priest over God's house that had been touched with the feeling of our infirmities. *In reality,*  
*there*

there can be no greater security of blessings to us than God's own promise, or if we could see the reasons which determine God to promise, the reason of the thing itself ; but it is an help to our weakness to be told that we have such an advocate with the Father, who having himself suffered being tempted, is able also to succour them, that are tempted ; thus it was fit Christ should suffer, and in order to this it was *absolutely necessary* he should be incarnate.

4. When God delivered a message of the *highest importance* to *the whole world*, he saw fit, in order to add the greater weight to it, to send it by his own Son. But whereas in case he had appeared with all the pomp and majesty of a God, he would have deterr'd instead of instructing us ; appearing in our flesh, he could instruct us in the most familiar manner, and set us an example every way the most powerful and engaging.

5. God from the beginning designed eternal life as the reward of righteousness ; this could not be known by the mere light of nature, but God was pleased to declare it to *Adam*. This eternal life was forfeited by sin ; but God promised it to *Abraham* for his faith, and thus promised it to all the faithful ; the knowledge of this eternal life however was for a considerable time confined to the posterity of *Abra-*  
H 2 *ham* ;

ham ; but at length God made it known by *Christ* to the *whole world* : He by fulfilling all righteousness had a right to eternal life, and because when he was in the form of God, *i. e.* as the only begotten Son of God, appeared in the glory of the Father, or with the *Shechinah*, to the posterity of *Abraham*, God's peculiar people, he emptied himself of it, and took the form of a slave or one that had no right to the inheritance, by being made in the *likeness of men* who have sinned and come short of the *glory of God*, and being found in fashion as a man, humbled himself yet farther, and became obedient to death (when by righteousness he had a title to a never-ending life) even the death of the cross, (which by the *Roman* law was the death of slaves, and which by the *Jewish* was pronounced accursed) therefore God highly exalted him, and gave him a name above every name ; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow ; that the *whole world* should become subject to him ; not only the *Jews* but the *heathen world*, and even those principalities and powers in the heavenly places which before had the dominion over them : See and com. *Phil.* ii. 5, — 11. with *Heb.* i. 8, 9. Therefore he not only had the grant of life for himself, but a power to give eternal life to as many as God had given him : By this obedience

dience to the law of a Mediator, he obtained a *celestial* instead of a *terrestrial* happiness, which was the promise to *Adam*, and a power of bestowing a proportionable degree of this *celestial* happiness on those who by overcoming the much greater difficulties in the way of their virtue, than there were in the way of innocent *Adam's*, obtained *through the goodness of God* a title to it. See and com. *Rom.* v. 15, 17. *Job.* x. 10.

Christ's death hath set us an example of the highest degree of virtue (more than a *mere man* could shew) and of the noblest reward of it, and thus given us an encouragement to expect a proportionable reward of proportionable degrees of virtue, especially when part of the reward of Christ's virtue in his obedience to death is his receiving a power to give eternal life to all that are conformed to the image of his holiness.

The only considerable difficulty in this matter is, how it could become so great and excellent a person as the Son of God to condescend so far to us, as because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, himself to take part of the same: But this difficulty, I apprehend, will be much lessened, if not intirely removed, by the following considerations.

(1.) We are too ignorant of the works of God to be able to pronounce what figure we bear in the rational creation.

(2.) In order to know this in any tolerable measure, we must be sure that we have not existed in a former state, (of which we never can be sure) and that we shall not be a much nobler sort of creatures in the future state. If we object against *any* part of revelation, we ought to take into consideration *the entire frame* of it ; now the same revelation which assures us of the Son of God's taking flesh for us, shews us that hereafter our understandings shall be so raised as that we shall know even as we are known, and that there shall be as great difference between our future and present knowledge, as between that of a grown man and a child.

(3.) It is a much surer way to argue from what we have *the greatest reason to believe*, concerning our redemption by Christ, that we are a much nobler sort of creatures than we are apt to imagine, than to argue against Christ's redemption from such a state of human nature as we have no solid grounds to suppose the true one. This difficulty it must be owned would be much increased if the accounts of human nature, given by such writers as *Hobs*, the author of the Fable of the Bees, &c. were true ; but that these persons have described

not

not pure and simple human nature, but human nature perverted in the worst of men, has been so effectually proved by the best writers of the present age, Dr. Clark, Mr. Hutchinson, and Mr. Butler, that we can hardly conceive of any thing to be added.

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## C H A P. VIII.

### *Of the doctrine of the Spirit of God.*

THE Spirit of God seems to be so called in allusion to the spirit of a man; *1 Cor. ii. 11.*

The two essential parts of the human composition, are generally represented in Scripture to be ψυχὴ and σῶμα, or the soul and body.

See *Gen. ii. 7.* *1 Cor. xv. 44, 45.* *ii. 14, 15, 16.* *Mat. x. 28.*

The Spirit is sometimes represented as a principle in man, distinct from the soul, superadded by Christ, the principle of supernatural knowledge and power. See *i Cor. ii. 11, 14.* *Jude 19, 20.* *i Cor. xiv. 2, 14, 15, 32, 37.*

As there is a spirit in man, so there is represented to be a Spirit of God also, *i Cor. ii. 11.* The fountain of that *supernatural*

knowledge and power we receive, *1 Cor.* ii. 10. xiii. 3, 4. the immediate agent, by which those works are performed, which are out of the common course of God's providence; tho' it must be owned, that just as the *common* operations of men are sometimes ascribed to the spirit in them; so sometimes, but less frequently, are the ordinary works of God's natural or moral providence, ascribed to God's Spirit.

This Spirit was given the church of Christ in the first ages, and as he received all from Christ, and acted in his name, so he is very properly called his Spirit. See *Jo. xvi.* *1 Cor. ii. 16.*

From this scriptural account of the Spirit, we may see (1.) why the good men, under the law, both received and expected divine assistances; yet the Spirit of Christ is never represented as given the church in common under the *Mosaick* economy, but only to prophets, *1 Pet. i.* Tho' good men, under that dispensation, were assisted by God in the practice of virtue, as may be seen in many parts of the *Psalms*, particularly in the xxvth, and might be said, *Psal. cxliii. 10.* to be guided by God's good Spirit, as God in his wise government of the world directed things in such a manner, that motives were suggested to their minds, by which they were excited to the practice of virtue; yet this is no proof of their being

being under the influence of that Spirit, which was not given till Jesus was glorified. In the li. *Psalm*, v. 11. it must be owned the *Psalmist* deprecates God's taking away his Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ; and v. 12. prays to be upheld with a free spirit. But that the *Psalmist* there refers to the spirit of prophecy, see fully proved by Mr. *Smith* in his excellent discourse of prophecy, p. 247.

(2.) Why, tho' it be plain that the *Abrahamick* covenant is the same with the Gospel, yet those who by adherence to that, and fulfilling its condition, viz. faith, were children, entitled to the inheritance, had the Spirit, as the earnest, only thro' Christ, who first took possession of this inheritance, and prepared the way for our receiving it. See *Gal.* iv. beg.

(3.) How the *Gentiles* (tho' they might have a faith, like *Abraham*, in God, as a rewarder of them that diligently seek him) could be partakers of the Spirit only thro' Christ, *Gal.* iii. 24.

(4.) How the ministration of the Spirit became a distinguishing character of the Gospel from the law, *Gal.* iii. 2, 3, 4, 5. *2 Cor.* iii. 3.

(5.) How the Spirit was said not to be given till Jesus was glorified, *Jo.* vii. 38, 39. (to be continued on the next page)

(6.) How

(6.) How the Spirit comes not to be promised the Jewish church in common, till the latter days, i. e. till the time that, as a nation or body politick, they shall have submitted to the Messiah, *Is.* lix. 21. *Ezek.* xxxvi. 27. xxxix. 29.

(7.) Why, tho' every thing that is good is, in Scripture, ascribed to God, yet St. Paul in the viith of the *Romans*, does not ascribe his delighting in the law of God after the inward man, and with the mind serving the law of God, *whilst under the law to the Spirit*; and in the viith chap. supposes only those that are *in Christ Jesus* to receive the Spirit; whereas there were many good men before Christ came into the world, and none are so without divine assistance.

(8.) Why our Saviour ascribes that assistance in the cause of virtue, by which persons were prepared to receive his doctrine, not to the Spirit, but the Father, *Jo.* vi. 37, 44, 45. See also *Jo.* xiii. 10. and compare with chap. xiv. 16, 17, 21, 23. and *Heb.* x. 16.

(9.) Why the assistance in the cause of virtue, which is afforded in the common course of providence, is ascribed to God or the Father, but not to the Spirit, *Ja.* i. 5, 17. And thus in the Lord's-Prayer we are taught to ask help for the practice of our duty, as afforded according to the constant course

course of God's *moral* providence, just as we ask daily bread, as given us according to the constant course of God's *natural* providence. St. *Luke*, chap. xi. relates the occasion of that prayer being given, to be one of the disciples desiring him to teach them to pray, as *John* taught his disciples, *i. e.* to teach them a form of prayer fitted to their present circumstances, as other *Jewish* doctors were wont to do; and accordingly he gives them a prayer exactly suited to their circumstances, wherein they are to pray for the setting up the Messiah's Kingdom, which now was at hand; after which time they were to receive the Spirit; which therefore our Saviour in his discourse, after reciting the prayer, promises them, as the principal blessing of his Kingdom, as he does in several other places. See *Jo.* vii. 38, 39. *Jo.* iii. beginning, &c. And thus he directs them how, after his resurrection, they are to perfect and complete this form, by adding to it the petition for the Spirit. See and compare *Jo.* xiv. 12, 13. *Acts* iv. 31. Just as in another case, he teaches them how, after his resurrection, they are to add to their prayers the mention of his name. *Jo.* xvi. 23, 24.

Our Saviour's encouraging the disciples to hope for the Spirit, from the consideration of God's fatherly goodness, does not prove that the gift of the Spirit must be as general

general as God's fatherly goodness. I will bring a parallel instance or two from our Saviour's discourse, Jo. xiv. which will make this very evident: Our Saviour promises, v. 12. that *he that believes in him*, shall do greater works than he himself had done. Here you see a *miraculous* power is promised to *faith*, without any restrictions or limitations; v. 16, 21, 23, 26. he promises to them that love him and keep his (which are also his Father's) commandments, the *illuminating* gifts of the Spirit as the effect of his and his Father's love to them; and yet none can justly argue, that because God's love to those that keep his commandments is universal and perpetual, therefore so must the gifts of the Holy Ghost be: The truth is, God's general goodness is the foundation of our hope of receiving all those blessings God sees fit to give us, and his *particular promises* shew what blessings are fit to be bestowed on those to whom the promises are made, and justly encourage *all* to expect the same, or like blessings, who are in the same or like circumstances.

(10.) Why the extraordinary assistance in the cause of virtue, granted the first Christians is ascribed to the Spirit, because he by his miraculous and illuminating gifts, was the first principle of it, revealing those doctrines which had the best tendency to promote holiness,

holiness, and confirming the truth and divinity of them, assuring the *Gentile* Christians of their interest in God's favour and title to the heavenly inheritance in common with the *Jewish*, and thus filling them with peace and joy, even in afflictions for the Gospel's sake; preserving the authority of the true in opposition to the false Apostles, and thus maintaining the purity of Christ's doctrine in the world, &c. promoting the edification of the church by the particular gifts of prayer, psalmody, &c. and furnishing Christians in common with a greater ability for the performance of these duties from an increase of knowledge. See to this purpose *Eph.* i, 13, 14, 17, 18. ii. 18, 22. iii. 16. iv. 30. v. 18, 19. vi. 18. *Jude* 19, 20. compare *1 Cor.* ii. 14. and *Rom.* viii. 26. *Rom.* viii. 9. compare *1 Cor.* xii. 3. *Rom.* viii. 10. compare *2 Cor.* xiii. 5. *Rom.* viii. 11, 23, 26. *Gal.* v. 16. to the end. *Gal.* vi. 1. *Rom.* viii. 15. compare *Gal.* iv. 6. *Gal.* iii. 2, *2 Cor.* xii. 12, 13. *2 Cor.* iii. throughout. *1 Cor.* i. 5, 6. *1 Jo.* i. 3. compare *Jo.* xiv. 21, 23. *1 Jo.* i. 7. compare *Jo.* xiv. 21, 24. *1 Jo.* ii. 20, 21, 27. *Rom.* vii. 6. compare *2 Cor.* iii. 6. *1 Cor.* xiv. throughout. *Col.* iii. 16. *Eph.* v. 18, 19.

(11.) We may see the reason of the allusion to God's dwelling among the *Israelites* by the *Shechinah*, in the discourses in the New Testament, of the Spirit, because believers,

lievers, particularly *Gentile* believers, were thus openly declared God's people by a visible symbol of his presence, and this (like the *Shechinah*) out of the common method of his providence. See *Jo.* i. 14. compare *Jo.* ii. 11. *Jo.* i. 16. compare *Eph.* i. 23. *Jo.* xiv. 16,—24. *Eph.* ii. 18. to the end. *1 Cor.* iii. 16. vi. 19. *2 Cor.* vi. 16, 17, 18. *1 Jo.* iii. 24.

(12.) Why the Spirit is represented as belonging to the whole body of Christ's church. *Ro.* viii. 9. *1 Cor.* xii. 3. *Jo.* iii. 5. vii. 38, 39. xiv. 23, 24. *viz.* because every member received some or other of his illuminating or miraculous gifts. See *Mark* xvi. 17. *Acts* ii. 1. compare chap. i. 15. *Acts* ii. 17, 18, 38, 39. xix. 4, 5, 6. *Rom.* xii. 2, 9. *Eph.* iv. 4, 11, 12, 13, 30. *1 Cor.* i. 5, 6, 7. ii. 14, 15. chap. xii. and xiv. throughout. *2 Cor.* iii. throughout, xiii. 3, 4, 5. compare chap. i. 21, 22. chap. xii. 12, 13. *Gal.* iii. 2, 14. iv. 6. v. 25. compare *Rom.* viii. 11, 13. *Eph.* i. 13, 14. compare *Rom.* viii. 11. *1 Thess.* i. 5, 6. v. 19, 20, 21, 22. *Col.* i. 9. *1 Jo.* ii. 20, 21, 27. v. 8, 9, 10. *Jude* 19, 20. Tho' the illuminating gifts were continued only with pious persons, and were increased by stricter holiness. *Eph.* iv. 30. v. 18. *1 Thess.* v. 19, 20. *Jo.* xiv. 17, 21, 23. *1 Jo.* i. 3, 6. ii. 24, 28. iii. 6, 24. iv. 4, 5, 6, 12, 13. v. 1, 2, 10. *2 Cor.* vi.

vi. 14. to the end, and chap. vii. 1. compared together.

*Corol. 13.* Why God is represented as sealing the Christians with his Spirit; sealing them to the day of redemption, &c. which agrees very well to the publick seal of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

*Corol. 14.* We may see the perfect agreement between the rational writers on the doctrine of the Spirit on the one ; hand those that deny the *Spirit's peculiar* operation in the business of our sanctification, don't mean to deny, either (1.) that in a *general* way every good disposition or action is from God, as he gives the natural powers, or furnishes with the motive, and causes our attention to it : Or (2.) that the good dispositions and actions which the *Gospel* motives do occasion, are owing to *Supernatural* methods God has taken for our recovery and salvation : But only (1.) that our natural powers, after divine assistance, are different from what they were before. And (2.) that we now have *new* motives to duty *revealed* to us, besides those which are contained in the *Gospel*, neither of which the rational writers for the assistance of the Spirit do assert. And on the other hand, those that deny the Spirit's particular operation in the business of holiness, do believe, that in the first age of the *Gospel* he was the author of sanctification, in  
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the very same way he is, by the generality of Christians, supposed to be so now, *viz.* by suggesting arguments to strengthen men's faith, and motives to their obedience; so that at last the controversy between these two turns upon this, *viz.* what is the critical meaning of the word Spirit in Scripture. It certainly sometimes signifies the principle of illumination and miraculous power. Does it ever signify a principle of holiness *distinct* from the two former? which were in their own nature, and are represented in Scripture, as principles of holiness. *Rom.* viii. 2, 11. *Eph.* iv. 30. 1 *Theſ.* v. 6. *Col.* iii. 16. *Gal.* vi. 1. *Eph.* iv. 12. v. 18, 19. *Gal.* v. 16. to the end. 1 *Theſ.* v. 19. *Jo.* xiv. 17, 21, 23. 1 *Jo.* iii. 24. compare chap. ii. 20. iv. 1, 4, 12, 13. 1 *Cor.* iii. 16. *Jude* 19, 20.

But however these questions be decided the main points on both sides are agreed, *viz.* that God works on our minds *only* by making us *attentive* to rational motives *already revealed*; and thus he does work on our minds *still*, as well as he did of old on the first Christians, see Dr. Clagget's inimitable discourse on the Holy Spirit, particularly p. 162, 163, 166, 191, 274, 282, 306, 312, of part I. and p. 190, 201, of part II. And in order to decide the controversy about the sense of the word Spirit, I think it should be considered,

considered, whether the Spirit in his illuminating and miraculous influences, were not in the first age common to all Christians; whether these are not now ceased, and yet whether the motives to virtue, and the evidences of the truth and divinity of Christ's doctrine, which arose from them, do not still continue, and at the same time that ordinary assistance in all ages, by a holy and merciful God, granted to men in their pursuits of virtue and happiness, viz. by throwing favourable occasions of doing good in their way, removing temptations, influencing their minds either immediately or mediately, as by impressions made on the body, by prosperous or adverse circumstances, counsels of friends, &c. and thus bringing virtuous motives to our minds; causing us to give such attention to them as shall excite good affections, and thus be a counter-ballance to the affections excited by sensible objects, and put us on the vigorous pursuit of virtue and happiness.

Upon the whole, the way in which God influences the minds of men, is by all rational writers supposed to be the causing them to be attentive to proper motives of action: The doctrines of the Gospel contain such motives: The revelation of these was owing to the illumination of the holy Ghost: This was peculiar to the first ages of Christianity, and was properly supernatural, i. e. not

agreeable to the common laws, by which the world is governed. There is no need of the continuance of such illuminating gifts of the Spirit, for the conveying the knowledge of the Gospel to us, any more than of the miraculous gifts for the conveying the evidence of it; both these sorts of gifts therefore are ceased; and yet still all virtue and goodness is owing to God as he furnishes us with not only the natural, but the moral power of action; *i. e.* he gives us reason and active power, and in the course of his providence orders it so, that proper motives, fitted to influence beings of such a make as we are, shall be proposed to our minds. As this assistance is given by God in the common course of his providence, 'tis, strictly speaking, *natural*, and not *supernatural* grace; and yet we, with as much reason, depend on God for it, and pray for it, and return our thanks on account of it, as being the natural, *i. e.* the regular and constant effect of God's moral providence, as we acknowledge, by a like prayer and thanksgiving, our dependance on God's natural providence for the stated and constant effects of that. I should be glad to be informed by those gentlemen who carry divine assistances farther than this, what they can mean by them, but either the giving us other faculties, which I am apt to think they will not be forward to assert, or else, the imparting

new knowledge to the mind, which should furnish it with new motives of action, which was done by the illuminating gifts of the Holy Ghost, which, on this supposition, are still continued in the Church. If they are persuaded they have such illuminations, I would propose this one thing to their serious consideration: The first Christians, who received these illuminations, could certainly distinguish them from the reasonings of their own minds; and therefore the Apostle appeals to these, as well as the miraculous gifts, as what the Christians experienced themselves to have; how comes it then to pass, that those very men will often observe, that the common assistance of the Spirit at least, is in a way so accommodated to our faculties, that we cannot distinguish his suggestions from our own reasonings, and that we are only sure that we are led by the Spirit by those effects of holiness, which the Scripture teaches us to ascribe to him as the cause. Again, the first Christians, who were illuminated by the Holy Ghost, discovered the effects of this gift to others, in their being all of a sudden without human means, masters of a vast compass of knowledge, which before they were wholly destitute of; whereas, far from any thing of this kind, those gentlemen come by the knowledge that they have by the use of the same natural means that others do,

and where these natural means fail them, there they are at a loss as well as their unenlightned neighbours.

See the following instances where the Apostles appeal to these illuminating gifts as what those they writ to experienced in themselves, 1 *Cor.* i. 5. ii. 14,—16. xi. 2, 3, 4,—13. 1 *Thes.* i. 5, 6. *Gal.* iii. 2. vi. 1. *Eph.* i. 13, 14. ii. 18. to the end. iv. 30. *Eph.* v. 18,—20. *Heb.* vi. 4,—6. 1 *Joh.* ii. 20. iii. 24. iv. 13. v. 6, 8, 9, 10. See the illuminating gifts of the holy Ghost mentioned as evidences of the truth of Christianity to the infidel world, *Acts* ii. 16, 17, 18. *Joh.* xvi. 9, 10. 1 *Cor.* ii. 4. xiv. 22, 24, 25. 2 *Cor.* iii. 2, 3. *Com.* 1 *Cor.* i. 5. *Heb.* ii. 4. *Com.* 1 *Cor.* xii. 11.

## C H A P. IX.

### *Of the intermediate state of happiness and misery.*

1. **B**OOTH Philosophy and Scripture teach us the distinction between the soul and body.

2. Philosophy cannot inform us, that when our souls are removed from these bodies, their powers may not be lain under

der such restraints by God as that we may not for a time be able freely to exert them.

3. The threatening to *Adam* for sin, was death, and life re-enters only through Christ : The Apostle argues, that in case Christ had not risen, those that had fallen asleep in Christ had perished, that then there had been no life but this, and then good men suffering for adherence to what they are persuaded is true religion, must be of all men most miserable, i *Cor. xv. 18, 19.*

4. Good men before Christ plainly expected eternal life ; but there is not the least intimation in the Old Testament of any expectation they had of an intermediate state of happiness ; but rather the contrary seems supposed.

5. As Christ is described as opening the way into heaven for us, and entering thither as our forerunner to prepare a place for us ; so it is agreeable to the analogy of God's proceedings, to suppose he first entered into paradise, or the place of the intermediate state of happiness, according to the notions of the Jews in Christ's time.

6. Accordingly we see Christ tells the thief on the cross that *that day* he should be with him in *Paradise* ; whereas Christ was not to ascend to *heaven* till after his resurrection.

7. After this good men seem to have expected this intermediate state of happiness: Thus *Stephen* prays to Christ to receive his departing spirit. St. *Paul*, *Phil.* i. 23. desires to depart and be with Christ, *2 Cor.* v. beg. The Apostle speaks of his being present with the Lord immediately on his being absent from the body, and this he represents as no more peculiar to himself than being raised up by Christ, *ch. iv.* 14. having an eternal weight of glory, *ver. 17.* An house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, *ch. v.* 1. After the possession of which he groaned earnestly, *ver. 4.* appearing before the judgment seat of Christ, as he says all must do, *whether present or absent*, *ver. 8, 9.*

8. Our Saviour, *Luke* xvi. in his parable of the rich man, in order to shew the folly of covetousness, represents the different ends of the worldly rich man, and the poor good man who had raised his expectations beyond this world to another, and describes the one as *immediately* entring on a state of happiness, the other of misery, in *Hades* or the invisible world, the place where departed spirits were lodged according to the notions and language of both *Jews* and *Gentiles* at the time when Christ delivered that parable.

9. As there were wise reasons (which I shall take notice of hereafter) for deferring the

the final recompence of both good and bad until after the general resurrection; so it seems a very wise method of God's providence that good men should have, for their encouragement to go through the difficulties they met with, some beginnings of this happiness before, and that Christ as the *first-born* among many brethren should first enter on the happiness both of *Paradise* and *Heaven*.

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## C H A P. X.

### *Of the state of the Church in the latter days.*

i. I Shall represent the Scripture account of this.

2. Shew the reasonableness of that account.

(1.) Then, the Scripture represents the Gospel as preached to all nations, *Mat.* xxiv. 14. The *Jews* as restored to their own land, and their ancient polity as erected again; and upon this many converts made from among the *Gentiles* to the worship of the one true God, as formerly in the prosperous times of the *Jewish* state, *Ezek.* xxxvii. *Isa.* ii. 2, 3, 4. *Isa.* ix. throughout. Then Christ is to appear in glory to the destruc-

tion of Antichrist, *Dan.* vii. 26. 2 *Thef.* ii. 8. and for the conversion of *Israel*, *Zecl.* xii. 10. *Apoc.* i. 7, *Psal.* li. 14. He is to come into his temple and reform the worship there ; 2 *Sam.* vii. 13. *Haggai* ii. 6, 7, 8, 9. *Mal.* iii. 1,—4. *Psal.* li. ad calc. then he is to erect his *perpetual* kingdom over the house of *Jacob*; *Ezek.* xxxvii. 25. and extend it to the ends of the earth, *Dan.* vii. 14. The martyrs are to be raised up to reign with Christ a thousand years, *Apoc.* xx. 4, 5. At the end of one thousand years, there is to be the *general* resurrection and judgment.

Now, (1.) As the Gospel was plainly fitted for the use of all mankind, so nothing can seem more reasonable and fit than that some time or other it should be made known to all,

(2.) The restoration of the *Jews*, shews a wise analogy between the methods of God's providence towards that people in different ages of the world, and is adapted to answer the greatest designs with respect to the general reformation of mankind.

(3.) Though it was very fit that Christ should appear the first time in a suffering condition ; yet it is also as fit that his sufferings should be rewarded with that glory which is in Scripture described as following them ; and though it was also fit that his disciples should pass through sufferings,

ings, yet it appears reasonable to suppose that when their virtues had thus been tried and improved, they should meet with a proportionable reward; and that those whose virtues had been put to the severest trial should meet with a peculiar and eminent reward.

(4.) As God in his providence ordered it that Christ should appear the first time, when he came to suffer, among the *Jews* who had been by various methods prepared for the reception of him; so it was agreeable to the analogy of God's proceedings to order that he should appear the second time in glory amongst the same people; whose *national* reception of him would be a means, *naturally adapted* to the bringing in the fulness of the *Gentiles*, as their *national* rejection of him, at his first coming, was *the occasion* of his Gospel's being first offered to some of the *Gentiles*. As to the restoration of the ancient worship of the *Jews*, it must be considered that most of their services were of a *political* rather than a *religious* nature, and therefore on the revival of their polity would be revived of course; and as to others of them, though they could not *prefigure* any thing relating to the spiritual kingdom of Christ, yet as they were so ordered as to bear a very exact resemblance to them, the restoration of those services among the *Jews*,

when

when they should be converted to Christianity, and so discern that resemblance, would shew the wisdom of God in the erecting both the worldly Kingdom among the Jews, and the spiritual Kingdom of Christ.

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## C H A P. XI.

### *Of the state of happiness of the Saints after the resurrection.*

**T**H E Scripture account of the matter lies thus.

(1.) We are described as having the greatest alteration made both in our mind and body, by which we shall be capable both of the noblest employments and delights. 1 Cor. xiii. 9,—13. xv. 42,—51.

(2.) Being in a place fitted up for us by God himself, *viz.* the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. 2 Pet. iii. Apoc. xxi.

(3.) We are to receive praise and honour from God, and to have the discoveries of his favour to us, in exact proportion to our services in this state of trial. Rom. ii. 10. Apoc. iii. 5. 1 Pet. i. 7. 2 Cor. ix. 6.

(4.) We are to be perfectly freed from labour, pain, sorrow, and sin. Eph. v. 27.

Apoc.

*Apoc.* xxi. 4, 27. xxii. 3. *Jude* 24. 2

*Theff.* i. 7.

(5.) We are to be employed in the chearful services of God, and in performing good offices to our fellow creatures. *Apoc.* xx. 3, 4, 10, 11. v. 12,—14. *1 Cor.* xiii. 8,

(6.) We are to be in the immediate presence of God, and that not as *Adam* in innocence, at *certain seasons* only, but *continually*, to be under his *peculiar government*, and to apply to him and receive favours from him *directly*, and no longer *thro' a Mediator*. *Psal.* xvii. 15. *Apoc.* xxi. 3, 7. xxii. 1, 3. *1 Cor.* xv. 24, 28.

(7.) We are to be with Christ where he is, and to behold his glory, or that light with which he is surrounded, a glory suitable to the only begotten Son of God. See *Jo.* xvii. 24. xii. 26.

(8.) We are to be conformed to Christ in glory. *1 Jo.* iii. 2. *Col.* iii. 4. *Rom.* viii. 21. *1 Cor.* xv. 43, 49. and dominion. *2 Theff.* i. 5. *Gal.* v. 21. *1 Cor.* vi. 10. *Psal.* xl ix. 14. *1 Cor.* vi. 2, 3. *Apoc.* i. 6. ii. 26, 27. iii. 5. v. 10. xxii. 5. *Mat.* xxv. 23. *2 Tim.* ii. 12.

(9.) We are to inherit *eternal life*, and that in an higher state of blessedness than the original promise to righteousness did imply. *Rom.* v. 17. *Jo.* x. 10. See *Corol.* 3d of the *Essay on the several dispensations, &c.* p. 80.

This

This is the Scripture account of the state of the blessed after the resurrection.

(1.) Then, nothing can be more reasonable to suppose, than that in order to the completion of our happiness, we should receive bodies fitted to the employments and enjoyments of our new state.

(2.) That the powers of our souls should be enlarged, which seems a natural consequence of the alteration of the frame of our bodies, and by which means a reward can be given to *all, even those that have had here the lowest understandings, exactly proportioned to their virtue.*

(3.) That after this state of trial is ended, we should have peculiar discoveries of the favour of God, should be where he manifests his extraordinary presence is a very reasonable supposition, and the very same with what *Tully* has made in his *Somnium Scipionis*.

(4.) That upon receiving bodies fitted to this new state, and not liable to the inconveniences we suffered from our former bodies, upon our freedom from the cares and troubles, as well as amusements of this life, our knowledge of God, and thus our love to him, and activity in doing his will, and particularly imitating him in acts of beneficence should increase, is most reasonably expected.

(5.) That

(5.) That the natural world should be exactly fitted to the moral; and thus a new earth be fitted up as a proper habitation for the righteous, as the old one was burnt up for the destruction of the wicked, is very reasonable to be supposed.

(6.) Nothing can be more fit and proper, than that the office of a Mediator should cease when the end of it hath ceased; and that God should *immediately* bestow his favours on the *righteous*.

(7.) That as our possession of this happiness is thro' Christ, we should enjoy it where he is, and thus by his presence an addition should be made to our happiness.

(8.) That we should be likened to him in the rewards of holiness, as we are conformed to him in holiness; and thus as he has dominion over all, we should sit with him in judgment on the wicked, and have under Christ the government of some affairs relating to large communities of reasonable beings; that as Christ is surrounded with glory, we also, who are children, should bear his image, who is the first-born among many brethren.

(9.) That our happiness should be increased beyond what was originally designed as the reward of righteousness, seems reasonable both on Christ's account and ours.

(1.) On Christ's, as a reward of his humiliation, he received the power of bestowing this

this eminent degree of blessedness on as many as God had given him. (2.) On ours, since by the increase of our appetites and passions since the fall, the difficulties of virtue are increased to us; and the sufferings to which we are exposed, put virtue to the greater trial, and discover more eminent degrees of it.

(10.) That the most eminent degrees of virtue should have according to all just proportion, the most glorious rewards.

(11.) That for the sake of the vulgar, this happiness should be set out by such figures as are to convey to the imagination the most lively notions of happiness; such as a marriage feast to represent the greatness of the joy; a crown after victory to represent the difficulties we are to go thro' before we attain perfection; and then the value God will set on our faithful services; the dwelling in the city of God, to represent the peace, prosperity, and order of a society of perfected creatures under the government of God himself, and in our heavenly Father's house, where God himself, with his innumerable hosts of attendants, and the whole body of his faithful servants disposed of in different apartments, according to their respective deserts, are represented as residing; an inheritance from our immortal Father, to represent to us the way in which we come by a title to it, *viz.* thro'

thro' the grace of God accepting faith for righteousness, dealing with us as his children, who are conformed to the image of his Son Jesus Christ in holiness; and lastly, that where those figures are very strong and capable of being misapplied, such wrong interpretation should be expressly guarded against by other plain and literal expressions \*.

(12.) That this happiness should not be conferred on us immediately at death, but should be reserved to be bestowed on the whole body of the faithful when collected together.

If any object against the Scriptures proposing any extrinsical motives to encourage virtue, he may please to consult, besides what is observed in the preface to this discourse, the reasonings of the excellent author of the *Essay of the several Dispensations*, p. 97.

\* If the pompous description of the city, in the *Revelations*, be here objected against, I answer (1.) that that prophecy seems to be delivered to St. John in a vision, as that to *Ezekiel* concerning *Jerusalem* to be rebuilt in the latter times of the *Jews* to which this in the *Revelations* seems continually to allude; and then 'tis no wonder we should meet with very strong painting, when the Apostle represents every thing to us as it was pictured on his own imagination in a vision. (2.) 'Tis certain that some part of that description is emblematical, *Apoc. xxi. 14.* and perhaps a greater part of it may be so than we are aware of.

## C H A P. XII.

*Of the state of punishment of the wicked  
after the resurrection.*

1. **T**HEN, it seems highly reasonable, that the wicked should not immediately receive their full and final punishment at death, but remain in expectation of it, to be inflicted at that time, when Christ as the reward of his obedience shall judge all that have lived in the world, raise up all in order to be judged, dispose of them in states of happiness or misery according to their deserts. See *Mat. xxv. 41. Jude 6. 2 Pet. ii. 4.*

2. That beings who have been likened in sin, should be likened in reaping the fruits of it, and therefore that wicked angels and wicked men should be adjudged to the same torments.

3. That after certain periods alterations should be made in the natural world, and that this should be accommodated to the state of the moral world; that at a time when God saw the wickedness of the inhabitants of the earth would make them ripe for utter destruction, he should so order things that an alteration should be made in the earth by fire, in which the wicked inhabitants should be

be burnt as formerly they were deluged by water. 2 Pet. iii. 3,—8.

(4.) That as the soul is naturally immortal, and as the consequences of virtue and vice, the happiness resulting from the one, and the misery from the other, are constant and perpetual, so those beings that continue vicious, should continue to reap degrees of misery proportioned to their vice, is perfectly reasonable. And as all results of the natural order of things are to be resolved into the will of the Author of nature; this is a fit and just discovery of God's hatred of sin, and displeasure against the workers of iniquity. Just as the evils befalling such persons in this life from the same natural order of things, are a discovery of God's displeasure.

(5.) That these things should be described in the most affecting manner, and represented by figures conveying to those to whom the revelation was first proposed, the liveliest notions of misery, as by fires kindled in the valley of *Hinnom*, from whence the place of their punishment is called *yeεvva*, a lake of fire and brimstone, and eternal fire in allusion to the destruction of *Sodom*, com. *Apoc.* xiv. 10, 11. with *Gen.* xix. 28. *Mat.* xxv. 41. with *Jude* 7; by the different degrees of punishment to which the greater or lesser judicatories among the

Jews condemned persons. *Mat.* ~~invad~~ 21,  
22.

*Corol.* We may see how to reconcile the differences of divines on this head: Some do represent the description of the wicked by fire as only metaphorical; and in their accounts of the future punishments of the wicked represent only the natural evil consequences of sin, and these they shew to be eternal. On the contrary, others make the destruction of the wicked by fire real and proper. But as they don't deny the natural immortality of the soul, they may suppose all the same *natural* and *eternal* ill effects of vice with the others. This is certain, the Scripture does not represent these *positive* punishments on the body, as absolutely eternal; the wicked are never described as raised with immortal and incorruptible bodies. On the contrary, they are said to perish, *i. e.* to die again so as never to rise more, as believers would have died the first death without rising again, if Christ had not risen. See and compare *John* x. 28. *Rom.* ii. 12. with *1 Cor.* xv. 18, 19. Those that believe not in Christ are to perish, *i. e.* to die as those that did not look at the brazen serpent. *Jo.* iii. 14,—17. The wages of sin is death, and therefore tho' the wicked are to be raised up in order to be judged and punished in the body; yet after this they are to die, to reap corruption, to die the second

death; which if it have not some resemblance to the former (as eternal life in misery has not) the words are unintelligible. See and compare *Rom.* v. throughout. chap. vi. 21, 22, 23. vii. 10. viii. 2, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13. *Gal.* v. 25. vi. 8. *Apoc.* xx. 4, 5, 6, 13, 14. See also *Jo.* vi. 27,—59, 63.

The *positive punishment* inflicted on the *bodies* of the wicked, is represented to be their being burnt up with the earth, tormented for as long time as God pleases, in the fire which shall burn up the earth; just as the positive punishment inflicted on the wicked inhabitants of the old world was being deluged with water. See 2 *Pet.* iii. throughout. Christ will descend *in flaming* fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, &c. who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from, or by the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power. 2 *Theff.* i. 8, 9. This fire is called unquenchable in allusion to a fire that is not put out till its subject be consumed, as the tares are said to be burnt up with unquenchable fire. The punishment is called eternal, i. e. a punishment which continues as long as the subject of it lasts, viz. the souls of the wicked *united to their raised bodies*, just as in all other like cases.

When the law of the *Israelites* is said to be eternal, the meaning is not that their

polity should last always, but that this should continue as long as the other; and in this sense the happiness of the saints opposed to the punishment of the wicked, is said to be eternal, *i. e.* 'tis to continue as long as the subject of it, *viz.* the souls of the righteous *united to their raised bodies,* shall continue, *i. e.* as we learn from other places, for ever.

Hell fire is said to be eternal, as the fire from heaven which consumed *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, by which they were turned into a burning lake, and set up as a lasting monument of God's vengeance, to which the punishments of the wicked in the other world are compared, is called eternal. See Dr. *Whitby's note on Jude 7.*

I am very far from saying any thing of this nature, to weaken the motive to holiness from the terrors of the other world; but on the contrary to strengthen it for the force of any motive on our mind, is proportioned as well to the firmness of the persuasion concerning it, as to the greatness of the thing it self; and therefore tho' eternal *positive* punishments be the strongest motive in it self; yet it won't be so likely to work on the mind as temporary *positive* punishments, together with the natural *eternal* ill consequences of vice.

Those rational divines who talk of the eternity of hell torments, when they come

to describe those torments, say nothing of the positive punishment by fire inflicted on the bodies of the wicked; but insist largely on their eternal exclusion from the happiness of the saints, of their loss of which they shall then have the quickest and most pungent sense, the horrors of conscience, when they shall be awakened to a sense of their past evil courses, the natural evils arising from ill habits, &c.

Now all this no one disputes; but then I would add the positive punishment by fire, which is certainly the literal sense of Scripture; and as there is no absurdity in it, ought, I imagine, to be preferred to the figurative; and tho' I suppose this positive punishment to be temporary, yet I cannot see how the *addition* of a positive temporary punishment to the natural eternal ill effects of vice, can be called a lessening the motives to virtue.

*Corol. 2.* The objection against the Christian religion from the doctrine of the eternity of hell torments, is now entirely removed; for the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul, and the natural eternal ill consequences of vice is a doctrine of natural religion; and the doctrine of *positive* punishments eternally inflicted on the wicked clothed with bodies again after the resurrection, cannot be proved to be a doctrine of revelation, and I think was not under-

stood to be so, by the first Christians; for *Justin Martyr* in a publick apology to the Emperor, wherein he speaks the common sentiments of Christians in his time, when he is arguing against the absurd notions of the *Heathens*, who deified those that had been wicked men here on earth, says, that we (*i. e.* Christians) suppose only holy persons to be made *immortal*, but that those that have lived wickedly without repentance, shall be tormented in *eternal* fire. See *Just. Martyr* Ed. Thirlb. p. 33. And in his dialogue having argued against the notions which some of the *Heathens* had of the *necessary* eternity and immortality of the soul, he adds, that we do not therefore believe that all souls shall die; that would be a comfortable doctrine indeed to the wicked; but this we believe, that pious souls shall continue in a better place, but the wicked in a worse, both waiting for the time of judgment. For thus those that are fit to appear before God *die no more*, but the others are tormented for *as long time as God sees fit* they should be, and be tormented, Id. p. 148, 149. *Irenæus* represents the punishments of the wicked as *eternal*, but then those which he describes as thus eternal, are not *positive* but *natural* punishment. See *Iren.* lib. 5. chap. 27. p. 325. Edit. *Paris.*

## C H A P. XIII.

*An objection against the internal evidence for Christianity answered.*

**I**T may be objected, that notwithstanding all the plausible arguments to shew the excellency of Christianity, yet they are confuted by plain fact, since after so long trial Christianity has not in any considerable degree promoted the happiness of mankind; but on the contrary it has been the cause of some evils, before little known in the world.

As to the first part of the objection, *viz.* that Christianity after the trial of so many ages has done no considerable good in the world.

*Ans.* (1.) It has a tendency to promote the practice of virtue, which makes for the happiness of mankind. And therefore as it is certain from the natural tendency of virtue to happiness, that in the *whole* it must have promoted the happiness of mankind, 'tis as evident from the natural tendency of Christianity to promote virtue, that in the *whole* mankind must have been the better for it.

(2.) However, it cannot produce these happy fruits when 'tis not believed, but wherever 'tis, according to the true representation of it in the *New Testament rationally, firmly and constantly* believed, it does operate effectually, where there is not some stronger motive from men's mistaken worldly interest, &c. to influence another way; and thus it necessarily must produce a great deal of good.

(3.) In the first ages of the Church, it made a very happy change amongst men.

(4.) It still continues to be the means of making many good men. And,

(5.) It will before the end of the world effect a general reformation.

2. As to the second part, viz. its causing, or rather occasioning many evils, particularly persecution.

*Ans.* (1.) New religions naturally create jealousies in the state.

(2.) 'Tis the excellency of Christ's religion that it opposed the corruptions both of the *Jews* and *Heathens*, and so provoked their rage.

(3.) Christ's doctrine awakened men to the exercise of their thoughts about religion (the most proper subject for their exercise;) but this mixing with men's passions produced divisions, which he by no means encouraged.

(4.) In

(4.) In all societies there must be some order; and there were, as I show in another place, very wise reasons for Christ's lodging considerable powers with the Apostles. This would easily afford an handle for wicked men in after ages, to claim a power over conscience for worldly ends.

(5.) The controversies in the Apostle's days between the Jewish and Gentile Christians led them to talk of Election, Justification by faith without the works of the law, &c. which in after-ages, when these terms were not understood, weak men easily misinterpreted and wicked men abused.

(6.) The Apostle *Paul's* account of Christ's righteousness and the effects of it, is easily liable to abuse, though in its own Nature, as I have shewn, admirably calculated to promote holiness.

(7.) Though the doctrines of Christianity are plain and practical, yet it is natural for speculative men from hints afforded them in the New Testament to carry their speculations farther, till at length they have made the Gospel a pure matter of speculation; and as persons whose minds have been tinctured with any sort of philosophy, naturally fall into a method of explaining other parts of learning by it, as it would be naturally thought there was a resemblance between one part of knowledge and another, as it was imagined of great use to shew an agreement

ment between Christianity and the prevailing Philosophy; so Christianity was of course turned into a science; and then as there are excellent things said of faith in the New Testament, and as men are naturally disposed to make favourable allowances in behalf of their lusts, ill-disposed persons easily took occasion hence to rely on speculative belief for salvation.

(8.) The affections towards God are as reasonable as any affections whatever; but like all the other affections, if there be not (*by reason*) a due ballance kept between them and the other affections, there will be a disorder.

Christianity (which is its excellency) raises the affections towards God, but that these affections prevail to the weakening other natural affections, and to the hurt of society, proceeds from the neglect of the use of reason which Christianity condemns; to prevent this evil, Christianity earnestly recommends the cultivating the other natural affections as universal benevolence in all the branches of it, and makes the affection towards God raised by the peculiar motives of the Gospel, subservient to this end.

(9.) We cannot argue, that because there is more wickedness prevailing in the ages since the Gospel has been preached, and in those countries where it has spread, that Christianity itself is an evil thing; the greater

er prevalence of vice at one time and in one place than another is owing to a great variety of circumstances ; Christianity may be so far from promoting, that it may in some measure remedy the evils that are in the world, and yet in some places there may be more evil prevailing since than before Christianity ; a greater effect may be produced by a less powerful cause without any or with but small impediment, than is by a much more powerful cause, with a very considerable impediment.

## CHAP. XIV.

### *Of the external evidence for Christianity, particularly miracles.*

**R**EVELATIONS may be considered as original or traditionary ; by original revelations I mean such as are made *directly* to a person himself ; by traditionary, those that are proposed to him by others who received a revelation from God ; and I chuse to use the words *original* and *traditionay*, rather than *immediate* and *mediate*, because this latter may seem to imply as if revelations made *directly* to the person himself, were always *immediately* from God ; whereas generally the *direct* revelations we have

have accounts of in history, particularly in the Old Testament, were not thus *immediate*, but by Angels sometimes appearing in an human shape, at other times making some glorious appearances, discovering a divine presence, and forming a voice in the air, by which the will of God was discovered; but *most frequently* representing things on the imagination of a person either sleeping or waking; this last was commonly the way by which revelations were made to the prophets; and since even when it is plain from the nature of the thing itself, that the revelation made by the Angel was only in a vision, yet every thing is represented as real, and things are described as done by the prophets in pursuance hereof, which yet could not possibly be done; it may very reasonably be supposed that many of the appearances of Angels, mentioned in the Old Testament, might be only visionary; and thus the whole story of Jacob's wrestling with an Angel, and the conference between Balaam, his ass, and the Angel may be only a vision, as I could easily shew very reasonable to be supposed, if it would not lead me too far.

Whatever revelations God makes to any, whether *original* or *traditional*, must be evidenced to come from him; the latter sort are certainly capable only of *external* evidence; but it may be doubted whether

as to the former sort they do not carry their own evidence along with them ; this question I think may be pretty easily determined from what has been already said ; what has given persons ground for thinking that *original* revelations must carry their own evidence along with them, has been their taking it for granted that all *original* revelations must be *immediate* ; but as on the contrary it has been shewn that most of the *original* revelations of which history gives us any accounts have not been *immediate*, all the reasoning built on that supposition turns against those that have made use of it. Is it not absurd to suppose that God should make a revelation by an Angel ? that as in the instance of *Moses*, Exod. iii. this Angel should shew a sign for the satisfaction of the person to whom the revelation is made ; and yet that in the very nature of things, all *original* revelations must carry their own evidence along with them ? If *original* revelations in the very nature of things carried their own evidence along with them, why should not a person be able as well to distinguish a revelation from God, made suppose by a voice, the first time he has such revelation, as any time after, contrary to what we find in the case of *Samuel*. See 1 Sam. iii. It must be then allowed that *original* revelations, when not *immediate*, do not carry their own evidence.

dence along with them. As to *immediate* revelations, it seems evident, that as the *original* Being is infinitely distant from all other beings ; so must his manner of acting be different from theirs ; and by consequence his operations on the mind be distinguishable from those of all other beings. It seems absurd that men should be able *immediately* to satisfy us they speak to us, and yet that God cannot.

Christ pretends to *immediate* revelations, and accordingly he always speaks of himself as *infallibly* certain of them, knowing that he came from God, &c. and therefore as the Jews had reason to believe him both an honest, and a sober considerate man ; they had some reason, as he shews them, to believe this testimony of his, concerning himself ; though he does not rest the matter wholly on that, but refers them to the confirmation of this testimony by the miracles he wrought in his Father's name : which leads me on naturally to another inquiry, *viz.* what evidence is to be expected for *traditional* revelations. A person may give me proof of his being honest and sincere ; but this cannot make me *absolutely certain* that he is not under the power of Enthusiasm, *i. e.* that he does not mistake either the natural reasonings of his own mind, or the impressions of other spirits for divine revelations.

All

All error is want of knowledge : Suppose then but this man not to know, or not sufficiently to consider that a thought may come into his mind of a sudden, he knows not how ; or be impressed with greater vigour on the mind than other thoughts, &c. and this from the natural frame of his mind ; or from its situation and circumstances, with regard to other created beings, whether material or immaterial ; and he may easily be supposed to draw this conclusion, viz. that God has revealed his will to him on a particular occasion, when all has been nothing but the delusion of his own fancy.

We must suppose then, that all *traditional* revelations must have some external evidence ; that evidence is chiefly the evidence of miracles, to discover the nature of which, and their manner of evidencing a revelation, I shall, as before, take my rise from the easiest and plainest principles. A miracle is something wonderful ; what makes things appear wonderful is not their greatness, but unusualness. God is the author of all things ; therefore the order and settlement of things (which we call the course of nature, the laws of nature, &c.) is an order of things fixed by him : this general order discovers God's general will to mankind always and every where, but cannot discover his will on particular occasions. We know not the power of the intermediate beings between God and

us ;

us ; therefore we cannot, from the mere nature of any works done above human power, conclude that they are wrought immediately by God.

We do not know all the laws by which those beings are governed, all the restraints they are lain under, therefore we cannot conclude merely from a man's giving discoveries of knowledge or power above human, that he is sent of God for some particular purpose.

But this we may know, that those intermediate beings are under some laws, some restraints ; particularly, that they are so far restrained, as that by their means we cannot be lain under an unavoidable deception as to the affair of revelation. It is supposed that it may be fit on some occasions God should make a revelation ; here are some circumstances of mankind at present, from which I cannot but judge it fit God should make a revelation ; a man comes with a pretence of a revelation ; he vouches God as the author of his doctrine, makes a solemn appeal to him, and gives discoveries of knowledge and power above human, and which for ought I know may be divine. If now this person does not come from God, then there can be no evidence of any person's coming from him ; then no person can come from him ; then God has precluded himself from all possibility of ever doing that, which yet it is

'tis supposed in *some circumstances*, at some times, and on some occasions may be fit and proper to be done, which is absurd ; from all which it follows, that discoveries in *a man*, of knowledge or power above *human*, to attest a revelation every way worthy of God, and not contradicted by the pretensions of any other man giving greater evidences of knowledge or power, must shew that man to come from God; but Christ gave such discoveries, therefore he came from God. \*. Q. E. D.

*Corol.* 1. We may see how, where the nature of the revelation itself does not make a difference between two pretenders, as in the case of *Moses* and the Magicians, yet

\* Miracles thus stated, I think, afford all the evidence to a revelation that can possibly be given ; it is not incumbent on us to prove that there are such reasons as do make it fit for God to make a general and standing revelation of his will. It is enough for us that we see clearly there may be such reasons ; and that it is impossible the contrary should be shewn. And now it being once proved that there may be such reasons, as shall make it necessary for a being of perfect wisdom to make a general and standing revelation of his will ; there can nothing be plainer than that we have no other way of judging concerning any pretensions to a revelation ; but from our natural notions of God. Let us see then how far these will direct us in the present case ; it is evident, that as we are here inquiring not about immediate but mediate revelations ; so the consideration of the different manner in which the original Being may be supposed to communicate his will to us from all other beings is here out of the case ; we can then only judge from the characters of wisdom and holiness, agreeable to our natural notions of God in the doctrine itself ; and the characters of knowledge and power, in the miracles (understood in the largest sense) by which it is supported.

the superiority of the works of the one to the other will.

*Cor. 2.* The argument of miracles for a revelation is probable only, not demonstrative.

If it could be shewn that it cannot possibly be fit for God on any occasion whatever to make any revelation by the mediation of a man or an Angel, it would be demonstrable that miracles could have no force to establish such revelations; on the other hand, if it could be shewn that it was fit on any particular occasions that God should make such revelation, these miracles brought to attest something worthy of God, and not opposed by superior miracles, would demonstrably prove such a revelation to have been actually made; but as for want of a perfect knowledge of the reasons of the divine actions, we are not certain what an infinitely wise Being must do; so in the argument of miracles, we must be contented with probability, which plainly is of the side of the revelation.

Here is a man pretends to bring from God a doctrine *that is certainly* worthy of God; in favour of this man, there are works wrought *at his pleasure* which I know to be above humane power, and which I cannot distinguish from *divine works*: If now such a *mediate* revelation may be a thing fit and proper, I have reason

son to think this an instance of it ; since I see all that evidence for it, which I could expect, if the thing were ; though for want of a perfect knowledge of the cause of this revelation, *viz.* the will of an infinitely wise Being, directed by *all the best reasons*, I cannot strictly demonstrate, any more than I can strictly demonstrate the existence of the external world.

*Corol. 3.* Miracles of themselves are not the *intire* evidence of revelation.

A revelation by an Angel or a man is a credible thing : A revelation by an Angel is pretended to be brought me, and the sign which I desire in proof of it is wrought ; I have then reason to believe it ; a revelation by a *man* is pretended to be brought me ; the man I know to be a wise and sober man, not interested in the case, having no private worldly views, and the doctrine I see to be every way worthy of God ; I have then reason to believe him, if he says, he received this *immediately* from God, or from God by the mediation of an Angel, for which he had such sign given for his satisfaction as he desired ; but my faith is still strengthned in his revelation, when long trial of the man and his doctrine makes us more fully satisfied of the disinterestedness of the former, and the happy tendency of the latter to promote true goodness ; when he performs any works above hu-

man power in attestation of his doctrine ; when they are very numerous, and as great as I could even wish for my satisfaction ; when there shall some appear to oppose his doctrine, but with manifest disadvantages in all respects ; when I shall have seen those things accomplished which himself gave as signs of his divine mission, and which were as great as I could have desired myself : *Moses* pretended to be raised up by God to accomplish that promise to the *Israelites*, concerning their deliverance out of *Egypt*, which they had some reason, from tradition from their fathers to believe he had made ; the thing he pretended to was credible ; he vouches for his divine commission a work above human power ; he goes on to establish his authority by more such works : There are some that oppose him, they imitate some of these works, hitherto the point remains doubtful. *Moses* at last performs such works as they cannot, and then it is determined in his favour ; *Moses* in his revelation supposes a person might arise, and in opposition to his doctrine, and to establish a contrary one unworthy of God, shew a sign, but he does not put the case of such an one's performing as many and great works as he had done.

Christ appeared at a time when revelation seems to have been needed, and with such

such a revelation as exactly answers the best notions we can form of one suited to the necessities of mankind ; he pretends to immediate communications with Heaven, discovers such wisdom, and at the same time such disinterestedness in his character, as makes his own testimony concerning himself credible ; his doctrine is wholly calculated, not to promote a worldly interest of his own, but the glory of God and good of mankind ; he appeals to works above human power in attestation of it ; those things are accomplished which himself gave as the sign, and proposed as the *final* evidence of his mission, *viz.* his resurrection and the pouring out of the gifts of the Holy Ghost. He foretold the arising of pretenders to his character, with the power of doing such things as exceed human ability ; but whenever such persons have appeared, the evidence they have brought for their divine mission has been ever vastly inferior to his.

Some of Christ's disciples, at a time when there was no appearance of such a thing, no circumstances of things that could lead to such a guess, foretold a corrupt state of the church, exactly in the minutest circumstances answering to what has since happened, and this introduced and established by such wonderful works as have been described ; but these have been found no

way equal to the others, on which pure and original Christianity is founded ; and the appearance of them, in exact agreement with their predictions, given out at a time when it was impossible for men by the mere force of human reason to have guessed at such events, is a farther confirmation of the divinity of the pure and original doctrine of Christ and the Apostles.

*Corol. 4.* It is not enough to establish a revelation to say that it contains nothing unworthy of God, and that there are works to vouch it above human power ; since there may be two opposite pretenders to a revelation, each performing such sort of works to confirm their two opposite claims, neither of which appear from the nature of the doctrine delivered by them to be unworthy of God to favour, as in the case of *Moses* and the magicians : Again, a good man may have, without grounds to support it, a strong impulse on his mind, that he has an extraordinary commission from God to set up for a reformer of mankind ; and that he shall have, if he sets about this work, extraordinary assistance ; as he thinks he has had a peculiar revelation of the great truths of natural religion made him, he may, in the simplicity of his heart, appeal for the confirmation of this *true* doctrine as a *peculiar* revelation to him, to works above human power, which works may, for ought

we know, be permitted by God to be wrought by spirits superior to us, whose existence natural reason with great probability shews us, who may be easily conceived *so good* as to be willing to favour the cause of virtue, and *yet not so perfect* in wisdom as that they may refuse such an unwarrantable method of promoting it. Again, with this true and sound doctrine of natural religion, another pretender to revelation may mix some other things which have no foundation ; and yet I may not be able to see how that part of his doctrine is false and unworthy of God ; and I cannot see but it is possible for a spirit superior to us, but still more defective in wisdom than the former, to support even the claims of this man. Again, there may be discoveries of more than human knowledge or power, by means of the interposition of particular spirits, to whom the government of particular countries is assigned, with designs very different from establishing any revelations from God, and designs opposite to each other. The discoveries of such knowledge and power then are *of themselves* no proofs of any revelation ; and when appealed to as such proofs, and that even in a case where the doctrine appears not unworthy of God, superior discoveries in opposition to their claim will throw the evidence on the other side ; as in the case

of the magicians contending with *Moses*, mentioned above.

(5.) That where there is nothing in the nature of the doctrine unworthy of God, and no superior work wrought in opposition to it, one or a few miracles will attest a revelation; but yet a number of miracles is additional evidence.

(6.) It seems evident that the grand laws by which the chief parts of the creation are governed, cannot be counteracted without a particular direction from God; but how do I know but God, for reasons unknown to me (but known to superior spirits, bad as well as good, who may make them known to a man; suppose *Joshua*) originally so adjusted the frame of things, or fixed such a law by which he would govern the world, that at such a particular time the sun (or earth) should stand still? *Joshua* accordingly foretels this; what then? does this prediction of *Joshua's* immediately establish the truth of any thing he says; no surely. If indeed he *appeals* to this as an evidence of a revelation he brings from God, and it falls out accordingly, it will establish his pretensions to a revelation, if there be no way left us of detecting the cheat; but then this evidence rests on the *appeal* that is made, and God's answering the appeal.

(7.) Mira-

(7.) Miracles vouch the truth of what a person delivers in the name of the Lord; therefore of any revelation said to be made him, or of any antient revelation on which his is built, and to which it has plainly a reference as prior to it, and necessarily to be supposed e'er that can be conceived to have any reality. *Moses* by miracles established his prophetick character. He is directed by Providence to give an account of this revelation made him, in writing. He introduces the mention of his own particular revelation by other antienter revelations, to which his had a plain reference, and on which it was built, as those to *Abraham*. His account therefore (on supposition of a wise Providence) is as much to be depended on, as to those more antient revelations, as his own.

'Tis plain from the frame of *Moses's* history, that he was directed by the Providence of God to write with this as his principal view, *viz.* the giving an account of God's dispensations to the *Israelitish* nation, and of the religion he had established among them.

As therefore by miracles he had established his prophetick character, and shewed the religion he had established among them was from God; so when he came to write down this revelation, the Providence of God would be concerned to see he should de-

liver it pure to posterity ; and then 'tis impossible to suppose he should be left without direction or guidance, as to those other parts of his writings that are wholly preparatory to this, *viz.* the accounts he gives of the method of God's providence to mankind from the beginning, and the several revelations he had made, particularly those to *Abraham*, which that made to him expressly mentioned, and all along supposed as the ground and foundation of it.

(8.) As there were never any miracles wrought to prove the inspiration of particular books, so no miracles do prove the inspiration of books. The books of the Old and New Testament contain revelations vouched by miracles ; but then, those miracles do, for that reason, no more vouch the inspiration of other persons, *viz.* the penmen of those books, than of any other persons whatever, suppose the transcribers of them. *Moses* having by miracles established his prophetick character, what he delivers concerning his own revelation, and those antienter revelations on which his is built, must be true ; for the knowledge of those facts of which himself was eye and ear witness, he certainly did not need revelation.

The knowledge of antienter facts he might have by tradition, and his accounts of those antienter facts, particularly of the peopling of the world, in which he mentions only  
the

the then known parts of the earth from the tradition preserved among them of that event, which may easily be supposed conveyed to him, exactly suits that supposition.

As to the other historical books of the Old Testament, we may depend on them as authentick accounts, given while there was a succession of Prophets in the Jewish Church to direct every thing of consequence to it, of God's miraculous dispensations towards that people, and of many particular revelations from time to time made them.

As to the *Hagiographa*, part of it, as a very considerable number of David's Psalms, is prophetical of the Messiah, the state of the Jews in their last grand captivity, their final restoration, &c. As to the other parts which are devotional and moral, much must certainly, both as to stile and turn of thought, be left to the natural genius of the writter.

As to those that are properly called the prophetical books; the messages they delivered in the name of the Lord must certainly be supposed to come from him, the future events foretold were certainly revealed by him; but as to the moral instructions they gave, and so admirably enforced, they were left much to their own genius, the diversity of which sufficiently discovers it self in different Prophets.

As

As to the New Testament; the Gospels contain a true history of Christ's doctrine and laws. 'Tis not necessary every thing in these books should be inspired, only that they should be so instructed in those things of consequence that they were ignorant of, directed in other things, and over-ruled in all, as that they might give such an account of Christ's doctrine, and the miracles that established it, as we may be able to depend on. And in order to give an account of the former, since Christ's discourses were spoken in another language than they were writ in; since they were often not understood at the time when spoken, by Apostles that heard them; since on representing these aright depends the delivery of Christ's doctrine and laws to distant ages of the world pure and uncorrupt; since Christ had promised to give his Spirit to his Apostles, to lead them into all truth, and bring whatever he had said to their remembrance; we must necessarily suppose that those of the Evangelists that were *Apostles* (with whose accounts the others do in the main agree) were under a particular direction in relating the discourses of Christ. As to the other facts related in the Gospels, particularly the miracles of Christ, there is no need of a particular revelation for the knowledge of such things as men had been eye and ear witnesses of, or received from such. That these

these writers themselves did not apprehend the necessity of such revelation, is plain from their putting the credibility of their history either (as St. John) on the evidence of their own Senses; or, as St. Luke, on the testimony of eye and ear witnesses. And lastly, that they did not write under such particular prophetick degree of inspiration is demonstrable from the uncertainty with which they express some lesser circumstances of facts, from the omissions in some Gospels supplied by others, and from the differences as to some lesser circumstances of facts.

The *Acts of the Apostles* are a narrative of the progress and spread of Christian doctrine, after Christ's resurrection; of the first converts made; of the manner of their admission; the terms of it; the doctrine before proposed to them to be believed; the discourses of the Apostles with the Jews after Christ had in the interval between his resurrection and final ascension, particularly instructed them in the prophecies, given his Spirit to lead them into all truth, particularly bestowed on them the word of knowledge, enabling them as Prophets of the New Testament to explain, *i. e.* fully to understand themselves, and to be able to make out to the reason and understanding of others, and the conviction or silencing of gainsayers, the Old Testament Prophecies

phecies relating to the great events to happen in the days of the Messiah, compare 1 Cor. xii. 8, 28. Eph. ii. 20. iii. 2—7. iv. 11. Rom. xvi. 25, 26. 3 Pet. i. 19, and the arguments they offered to them, as direct evidence of Jesus being the Messiah from the agreement of the distinguishing characters of the Messiah to him, and him alone.

Of the Epistles, the greatest number are St. Paul's; and those are for the most part writ to the *idolatrous Gentiles*, to confirm them in the liberty of the Gospel in opposition to *Judaizers*: These Epistles therefore contain his *Gospel*, or the revelation peculiarly made him, viz. God's readiness now to admit even the *idolatrous Gentiles* on their repentance and faith into his Church, without the observance of the law of *Moses*. And this Gospel of his he every where, on proper occasions, in those Epistles confirms by an appeal to the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, which God by him conferred on the Churches, one of which, viz. the word of knowledge, he discovers in those Epistles, by making out in clear and connected discourses, the truth and evidence of his peculiar Gospel from the Old Testament.

The Epistles to the *Thessalonians* are wholly either moral or prophetical.

In the Epistles to the *Corinthians*, besides what contains moral instruction, or relates to

to his peculiar Gospel, the chief parts are taken up in correcting abuses crept in among them, particularly relating to the Lord's-Supper ; to rectify which, he brings them back to the institution of Christ, as he says he had received it *immediately* from him. His apostolical authority he every where claims in these Epistles, and for proof of it appeals to the gifts of the Holy Ghost he had conferred on them. He gives particular directions in particular difficult cases, as one that had been found faithful in his apostolical trust, and therefore of consequence as one that had the Spirit of Christ ; he gives particular directions about the exercise of their spiritual gifts, which he leaves those who had the Spirit to be judges of. In his first Epistle he directs them to put from them a wicked member of their society, and predicts a corporal punishment inflicted by Satan that should attend this sentence of theirs in excluding him their communion ; and this act of discipline in his second Epistle he commends them for exercising.

As to the Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*, St. *Paul* had lain claim (and by the gifts of the Holy Ghost shewn the justice of his claim) to all the powers of an Apostle ; one of which was to make settlements, and give orders about the affairs of the Christian Church in Christ's name, and by his authority. *Mat.* xvi. 19. xviii. 18.

To

To give force to all his after directions, in the beginning of these Epistles he is careful to mention his apostolical authority. As he was peculiarly the Apostle of the *idolatrous Gentiles*, in giving such directions to the Evangelists sent among them, he was exercising his particular office; and for establishment of his apostolical authority, he appeals to those gifts of the Holy Ghost that were conferred by him, *1 Tim.* iv. 14. *2 Tim.* i. 6, 7, 14.

The Epistle to the *Hebrews* was writ to establish the Christian converts in *Judea* in their adherence to the Gospel, notwithstanding the persecutions they met with from their unbelieving countrymen; and to this purpose he shews them the excellency of the Gospel above the Law.

As he here writes to those to whom he was not in a particular manner sent, so he prudently avoids the mention of his apostolical authority, and grounds whatever he says to them on reasonings from the Old Testament, which was a very proper way of arguing, in order to confirm those who had grafted Christianity on the antient revelation of *Moses* and the Prophets; and especially, when the *adversaries* against whom he argues were those who allowed the authority of the *Old Testament*, and *that only*.

But

But tho' in this Epistle the Apostle don't see fit to mention any thing of his apostolical authority, yet as in other places he both makes and justifies his claim, to *all* the gifts of an Apostle, one of which was the *word of knowledge*; so 'tis evident the main doctrine of this Epistle is grounded on the sense the Apostle gives to some passages or other of the Old Testament.

As *Paul* was peculiarly the Apostle of the idolatrous *Gentiles*, so was *Peter* of the proselytes of the gate, to whom he first opened the Gospel, *Acts* x. 11. and his Epistle seems to have been directed to them \*. To these therefore (in like manner as *Paul* to the idolatrous *Gentiles*) he writes with the authority of an Apostle. In the beginning he lays claim to that character, and for the establishment of it appeals to the word of Prophecy, which he had (in common with other Apostles, or chief teachers of the Christian Church) and which in many instances he had discovered.

The Epistle of *James* contains no peculiar doctrine, and therefore, in case it were cer-

\* 'Tis directed to the strangers, or sojourners that came up to *Jerusalem* to worship, but had not their residence there, of the dispersion throughout *Pontus*, &c. the same with the dispersion of the *Greeks* or *Gentiles*, who 'tis plain are not *Jews* dispersed among the *Gentiles*, for they are called *Gentiles* themselves, *Job*. vii. 35. and very probably are the devout *Gentiles* or proselytes of the gate, to whom the *Jews* thought our Saviour would betake himself on his failing of success amongst them.

See the second Essay in the *Miscellanea Sacra*.

tain that it was writ by the Apostle of that name, needs no appeal to an apostolical authority, for the support of what it contains, *viz.* plain, moral instructions, that carry their own evidence along with them.

As *John* lived the last of all the Apostles, so he saw many deviations from the doctrine of Christ prevailing in the Church, and to caution persons against these, he writes his Epistles, which contain no new point of doctrine, and therefore nothing that needs the confirmation of miracles. The Epistles to the seven *Asian* Churches seem much of the same nature with *John's* other Epistles, and the rest of the book of *Revelations* is prophetical.

Much of the same nature with *John's* is *Jude's* Epistle, being designed to guard persons against those that had taught a doctrine contrary to that of the Apostles, who had the Spirit themselves, and had conferred it on the Churches ver. 17, 20. whereas these false teachers were putely animal men destitute of the Spirit, ver. 19.

(9.) As 'tis plain from Holy Scripture, that in the ages before that of the Messiah, the affairs of particular nations were committed to particular Angels, and almost all nations we are acquainted with, have had a notion among them, of predictions, and miraculous interpositions particularly in their behalf, in opposition to other nations, and have

have accordingly addressed the supreme Deity; or superior Deities by those subordinate powers; may not we suppose this general notion of revelation and miracles to have a general foundation? and what can that be so easily supposed to be, as *a general experience of supernatural interpositions?* And if this be supposed (which is pretended by the *Heathens*, and the notion of it was the ground of their ascribing their victories to their gods, and of the rivalship the worshippers of different deities *fancied* between them, as well as of the *real* contentions between the diviners or supposed interpreters, messengers, or agents of these different deities of different countries) will not all this exactly agree with the accounts of this affair in *Daniel*, and give an easy account of the reason of God's challenging the deities of the *Heathen*, and their diviners, and his baffling their knowledge and power, by the wonderful accomplishments of predictions of his own Prophets, some of them even relating to the punishment of these nations; And thus God's shewing to the *Israelites*, and the whole world, that he is God of Gods, and Lord of Lords? Such revelations or miracles allowed in the *Heathen* world, won't at all affect revelation as built on miracles. Miracles never prove a *divine* interposition for a particular purpose, as attesting a person's mission, but where there is an

appeal made to God. Now these predictions or miracles here supposed, were not produced by any person coming in God's name, or pretending a mission from him; and therefore are quite besides the present case.

(10.) It seems not a full account of a miracle which is given us by Mr. *Chandler* in his late admirable discourse on that subject, *viz.* that 'tis a work above the natural power of that being which seems to perform it.

This account very well suits the case of traditional revelations, but not of original ones either mediate or immediate. (1.) Not of original, immediate revelations; God's revealing himself to any person, is a miraculous act, and the highest attestation to a doctrine. (2.) Nor original mediate ones: An Angel brings a revelation from God: The *visible appearance of an Angel* is a miraculous act: And where the doctrine brought is worthy of God, and not contradicted by superior works, here is the very same *kind of evidence* of a divine mission, as if works were performed by this Angel which he could not do by his own *natural* strength; and whether an Angel performing any work does it by his own strength or no, we can never know, except we were better acquainted with the powers of Angels. But if we could know this, we should not be got a whit

whit farther in the proof of a divine doctrine ; for a work which none but *Michael* can perform, is no more an evidence of a divine interposition than what does not exceed the powers of *Gabriel* or *Raphael*.

( 11.) Miracles, or unusual effects of the power of God either mediate or immediate to attest a revelation, are the *alone* proper evidences of a doctrine's being from God. The nature of the doctrine only shews it fit to come from God. As to predictions going before concerning a person to come from God, these cannot be the *only* evidences of a revelation, since the first revelation could not have them, nor are *they at all* evidences of a revelation ; but as they are *extraordinary* discoveries of more than human knowledge or power, *i.e.* as they are miraculous ; of which more in the next chapter. When there has been a former revelation, wherein certain characters are laid down that are to agree to one that is to come into the world at a particular time, &c. the first enquiry in order of nature (as is very judiciously observed by Mr. *Chandler*) is, whether he be *a* Prophet of God at all, which is included in the supposition of his being *the* particular Prophet mark'd out in an antient revelation. Now the proper vouchers for his prophetick character are miracles. And thus he may establish his prophetick character, in the *same manner*,

and by the same means as theirs was who brought the first revelation. If he has done this, nothing can shake his prophetick character, but what equally affects the former, and indeed all revelation whatsoever. If he be not the person pointed at in a former revelation, because tho' many of the characters (particularly that of time) did, yet some did not agree to him; and if no other person at the time within which this is to happen, lays claim to the character, the consequence is, that the former revelation is equally a juggle with his; and then, if a pretended revelation (as the *Mosaick*) supported by so many miracles, and accomplishments of predictions given, some of them, as signs of accomplishments of farther predictions, particularly of those relating to this great person to come into the world; and if a pretended revelation of a person claiming to be a Prophet of God, and establishing that claim by as great miracles as even our natural reason would lead us to expect for a revelation, may prove only pretended and not real, then all pretensions to revelation must, with the possibility of producing suitable evidence for revelation, be given up.

On the other hand, if a person has really proved his being a Prophet, he has proved the truth of his prophetick doctrine; and then if this be part of it, that he is the par-

ticular person designed in antient prophecies, he has fully proved the truth of that.

When Christ appeared first, the most eminent and distinguishing characters of the Messiah, which related to his sufferings, death, resurrection, and the pouring out the gifts of the Holy Ghost, could not appear in him: The only distinguishing character that he could at first be supposed to appeal to, was his being born of a virgin; but tho' this were a distinguishing character, yet, since in its own nature it would not admit of so clear and full evidence as to be fit to be made a certain mark of a particular person, and therefore was given at first for a quite different purpose, and that not without another sign then to appear, to assure of its accomplishment, it was not fit our Saviour should appeal to that.

Miracles would well establish his prophetick character, and so his right to apply all the marks of the Messiah to himself, (of which none that were as yet to appear were found wanting) even those that were not to appear 'till after his death; otherwise he could never establish his Messiahship during his life, nay not 'till the very end of all things, when alone all the characters of the Messiah can appear to agree in him; and then neither could he ever before establish his divine mission, which (when once he had lain claim to the Messiahship) depended on the justice of

that claim. On the other hand, taking miracles as the foundation of Christ's religion, we have a full proof of it. That the remaining characters of the Messiah shall be fulfilled in him, we have this heap of evidence; all the miracles that establish the Jewish revelation; all the miraculous deliverances of that people in particular, some of which were expressly given as signs of the great salvation by the Messiah, who if Jesus be not he, has never, and can never appear; all the predictions that have exactly been answered by events relating to the first setting up such a kingdom as Christ claims, to the intermediate state between the first beginnings and the glorious completion of this kingdom; all the extraordinary discoveries of knowledge and power more than human, shewn by Christ and the Apostles; and lastly, such a state of things in the world (in exact agreement with antient predictions) as renders the accomplishment of the most difficult parts yet behind, such as, particularly, those relating to the restoration of the Jews) not only *possible* but *probable*.

As this was the proper evidence on which Christianity (supposing it a divine revelation) ought to be built; so this was the evidence on which Christ himself ever built it. Tho' he did not for very wise reasons, (of which Mr. *Locke* has given an excellent account in his admirable discourse of the reasonableness

sonableness of Christianity) declare himself *openly* during his ministry to be the Messiah, yet in prophetick language he declares himself the Messiah. He supposes the *Jews*, even at that time, inexcusable in not believing he was *he*, or the great person they then expected. At the conclusion of his ministry he plainly declares to his disciples that he is the Messiah ; but as the only evidence he could offer as yet for his being the Messiah, was his miracles brought to attest a most holy doctrine ; so this is the evidence to which he ever appeals. His miracles he vouches for the evidence of his *entire* character as he had claimed it, not only as one *sent* of God, but his *Son*, which he knew the *Jews* at that time would easily understand as a character of the Messiah. He gives his own resurrection as a proof of the justice of his claim, and so the pouring out the gifts of the Holy Ghost after his resurrection, without considering them as the accomplishment of antient predictions relating to the Messiah.

But it is pretended, (1.) that Christ himself appealed to prophecies as *evidences* of his right to that character which he claimed ; as the *principal* evidences of it ; and that when he mentions miracles as evidences, 'tis *chiefly at least*, if not *solely*, as accomplishments of particular prophecies.

(2.) That the Apostle *Peter* has plainly preferred the argument of prophecies to miracles,

racles, by declaring the word of prophecy more sure than even the voice from heaven, which himself heard. 2 Pet. i. 19. I will endeavour to give such an answer to both these objections as may be fully satisfactory.

As to the first, the two strongest passages that I know of, are *Jo.* v. and *Mat.* xi. which I shall therefore particularly consider.

In the first of these our Saviour, after a plain and open appeal made to his *miracles* for the justice of his claims, tells the *Jews*, that they do indeed search the Scriptures in hopes to find eternal life from thence; and yet so strangely inconsistent are they in their conduct, that they will not come to him for that life, who had (by his miracles to which he but just before appealed) shewn that he was that person they expected should give eternal life.

He tells them just afterwards, that if they believed *Moses*, viz. first predicting that there should come a Prophet like unto him; and then laying down certain rules by which they should judge a true from a false Prophet, they would easily discern him to be the Prophet *Moses* spake of, and how he laid claim to that character.

As to the second, there is no prophecy particularly referred to, they are all miracles, and therefore (as I have shewn) are proper evidences

dences of the truth of what they are brought to prove, without the least consideration of them as accomplishments of prophecies; and lastly, as to the places in the Prophets supposed to be referred to, neither of them do at all relate to that affair.

*If.* xxxv. plainly describes the *Jews* returning from some great captivity, I incline to think their last grand captivity, and the joy amongst them on this occasion, insomuch that (to speak, as the Prophet plainly does in a figurative manner) even the dumb should sing, &c. and as to the other place supposed to be referr'd to, *viz.* of the poor having the Gospel preached to them, the Prophet only speaks of the meek or low spirited *Jews* having the good news of their deliverance from, as I apprehend, their last grand captivity, preached to them. So ridiculously would our Saviour argue if you suppose him to infer his being the Messiah from his agreement with these imaginary prophetick characters of the Messiah. But now if you suppose him, in what he here says, to argue from his miracles, and the nature and tendency of his doctrine, which is by very far the most natural sense of his words, nothing can be stronger than what he here advances.

(2.) As to the passage in *Peter* on which so much stress has been laid, to shew the preference of prophecies to miracles, the author

author of *Miscellanea Sacra* has said so much with an accuracy of judgment so peculiar to himself, that I shall not venture to enlarge on a subject that he seems almost to have exhausted; I shall therefore only observe two things in confirmation of that sense of the words which refer them unto the prophetick or illuminating gifts under the new as well as old dispensation.

(1.) That the *Jews* themselves give the same preference of the word of prophecy to the voice from heaven that St. *Peter* is here supposed to do.

(2.) That the interpretation given by the author of *Miscellanea Sacra*, does as well agree with the context following, as he has shewn it to do with that preceding; for thus stands the connection of his discourses. Prophecy is more sure than this voice from heaven, and a better and fuller direction to you. The reason of their adherence to prophecy, is this, that then holy men spake by the direction of the Holy Ghost. This has been *ever* the character of true Prophets, as well as of us in particular, who are the Prophets of the New Testament; and the fate of *true* Prophets (as well as their character) has been in all ages much the same; for as there were in the antient *Jewish* Church men who shewed the justice of their claim to the prophetick character by the miracles they wrought, and the accomplishment of their

their prophecies, so there were also some false pretenders to this character. In like manner it may well be expected there should in the Christian Church arise some that should oppose our prophetick character.

The miracles of our Saviour considered, together with the nature of his doctrine and his freedom from charge of imposture discovered by his *voluntary* sufferings, are in themselves *direct* proofs of his *divine mission*, and *firm and solid* (as I have shewn) *tho' indirect*, proofs of his Messiahship; and therefore even after the distinguishing characters of the Messiah had appeared in our Saviour, and had been appealed to also as evidences of his Messiahship; yet these are referred to for the proof of his being the *Son of God*. *Jo. xx. 30, 31.* *i Jo. v. 6,*  
*8.* And tho' when the distinguishing characters of the Messiah, *viz.* his *voluntary* sufferings with a *declared* design of promoting the salvation of sinners, not only among the *Jews*, but the *Gentiles*, his resurrection so as *never to return to corruption*, and pouring out the gifts of the Holy Ghost as evidences of his universal dominion, had appeared, the Apostles argue from these with the *Jews*, in proof of Jesus being the *Messiah*; yet even in their arguing with the *Jews themselves*, they sometimes drop the consideration of these things being accomplishments of prophecies, and consider them  
as

as *absolute* arguments. See *Acts* iii. 15. v. 30, 31. x. 40, 41, 42. I will conclude this chapter with taking notice of a few instances in which the wisdom of God was discovered in the choice of this method of miracles for the establishment of Christianity.

Hereby Christianity was proved in that very method, by which a person that had only the light of nature would expect a revelation should be proved; hereby it was proved in that very way by which *Moses's* mission was proved, and afterwards confirmed to the *Israelites*; and which just after mention *Deut.* xviii. of a great Prophet like to him that should come, he lays down as the rule to judge a true Prophet by.

Thus, the Gospel was fully proved to the *Gentiles*, who were perfectly unacquainted with the prophecies. Thus, they would be easily led to judge that the Apostles were more likely to be right in their application of the distinguishing characters of the *Messiah* to *Jesus*, in prophecies, than to them, by reason of their unacquaintance with the language, customs of the people, &c. appeared difficult, than the unbelieving *Jews*, who interpreted them differently.

Thus, the well disposed *Jews* at that time would be inclined to lay aside their fondness for their traditions, &c. and attend to the evidence the Apostles produced for their interpretations. Thus, even those that lived before

fore so much as one distinguishing character of the Messiah had appeared, might be satisfied of the divinity of his doctrine; and thus we have full assurance of the completion of those characters of the Messiah in him, that are not to be fulfilled 'till the end of all things.

Thus, as Christianity is designed to be a standing religion, it has standing evidence, and such as does not lose its force through length of time, ignorance of language, customs, &c. loss of books, or parts of books, or disorderly placing of them, or any part of them, or errors crept into them through negligence of transcribers, &c. all or most of which inconveniences would naturally fall out, if the evidence of Christianity were put on antient prophecies.

## C H A P. XV.

### *Of the Miracles of Christ in particular.*

**E**V E R Y Doctrine that comes from God must appear worthy of God ; but that alone will not prove that it came from God ; a person comes with a pretence of a revelation from God, and besides his doctrines being worthy of God, he shews that he is neither Enthusiast or Impostor, and so that his testimony concerning himself

self is credible ; but besides this, he shews such works in favour of his mission, as we have reason to think were performed either mediately or immediately by God, since they are works above human power, by their number and greatness fitted to gain the attention of persons to such a doctrine as he delivers, and to give it success in the world, and make it answer those purposes which it appears designed to answer ; and this is now a complete evidence of such a person's divine mission ; and in this way of resolving the evidence for a revelation it plainly appears, that the whole cause is at length rested on the moral fitness of things : It was fit there should be a revelation ; that this revelation should be attested by miracles ; that these miracles for their number and greatness should be just such as to make the revelation answer those ends for which it appears to have been given.

This being now the clear state of the case, I shall consider particularly the miracles of Christ while on earth, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost exercised by the Apostles and first Christians, and shew how fitly adapted these were to the making Christianity answer those great ends for which it was designed.

The former of these I shall consider in this, the latter in the next chapter.

Christ then wrought some miracles at the very beginning of his ministry, to excite attention and procure regard to his doctrine ; but then he reproved those who regarded only works of power, and calls on them to consider the nature and tendency of his doctrine.

He does all in his Father's name, and makes continual appeals to him ; his miracles were such as were particularly adapted to convince those amongst whom he lived, as the curing such diseases as they thought incurable, performing such works as had, or had been pretended to be wrought by others of their nation, as casting out devils, &c. and yet such as should not be confined to the good of that particular people, as may be seen in the case of the Samaritan Woman, the Syrophœnician Woman, &c. which was perfectly agreeable to his character of a general instructor of mankind ; his works were useful and never merely amusing ; and therefore though as his doctrine could not spread in the world without the gift of tongues, that power was to attend it in its proper time ; yet as it was of no use during his ministry, which was confined to Judea, he never used it to astonish and amuse people. His miracles promoted no worldly views of riches, power and greatness, but the good of others to gain credit to his doctrine.

In the performance of many of his miracles, he ordered his own concealment, which shewed his humility ; and by this method he avoided their attempts to make him a king, which would have contradicted, the spiritual designs of his coming into the world.

As he taught the Jews the kingdom of God was at hand, and designed by degrees to bring them to believe that himself was king of that kingdom, he wrought so many and great miracles as were suitable to the character of the prophet that was to come like to *Moses*. See *Deut.* xviii. 18, Com. c. xxxiv. 12.

He wrought no miracles of revenge on his enemies ; but when on his seizure by them, *Peter* in defence of his master wounded one of them, Christ wrought a miracle to heal the wound.

When by a miracle he had fed the bodies of the multitude, and observed them on that to follow him in great numbers, he cautions them lest they should suffer the concern for their bodies to prevail above that for their souls ; and puts them in mind of attending more to his doctrine, which would give them eternal life, than to any concerns of this short and frail life ; though at the same time he could not but see that such spiritual discourse as this would lessen the number of his followers.

By

By some of his miracles he discouraged the superstitious notions of the Jews at that time, concerning the positive observances of the law, and their preference even to moral duties, as by healing on the Sabbath day, &c. Sometimes, as in the curse of the barren fig-tree, he instructed them by his miracles in some moral truth, somewhat after the manner the prophets of old were directed to instruct the Jews by typical actions ; Christ's works, as for the benefit of men they were confined chiefly to the earth (though at the same time he discovered a power over the winds and the waves and even the invisible world) when the Jews required a sign from heaven, i.e. a work of meer pomp and amusement, or terror and punishment, the former of which was not agreeable to the wisdom, the latter to the mercifulness of his design, he refused it.

As he discovered his own confidence in God, by trusting his extraordinary power for his support whilst discharging that peculiar trust that was committed to him ; so by supplying the wants of those that followed him in a miraculous way, after solemn addresses to God, he taught them to consider God as the author of all their blessings, and to trust him in every time of need. In the same lesson he instructed them by his miracle of stilling the winds

and the waves. He shewed the number, power and malice of evil Spirits, and so God's goodness in preserving us from them, by turning the Devils into the herd of swine.

Lastly, He acted agreeably to his prophe-tick character, in correcting the disorders that had crept into the place of divine worship, and at the same time taught persons a becoming regard to the temple service appointed by God, as long as that polity lasted. And lastly, shewed his regard to the *Gentiles*, on whom the *Jews* poured contempt, by turning the buyers and sellers out of their court; whither the *Jews* had brought them:

## C H A P. XVI.

### *Of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.*

**I**N treating on this subject, I shall  
1. Shew what these gifts of the Holy Ghost were, and describe the nature of them as particularly as the scripture accounts lead us to the knowledge of them.

2. I shall consider the greatness of the evidence they afford to Christianity, and particularly the superiority of this evidence, to that of the miracles of Christ himself while on earth.

(1) Then

(1.) Then, I am to consider the several gifts of the Holy Ghost ; of which we have the most exact account, *1 Cor.* xii. 8,---11. And,

*First*, The gift of wisdom, which furnished men for being Apostles in the Christian Church, *1 Cor.* xii. 8. *Com.* v. 28. This was necessary for the furnishing twelve or fourteen illiterate men with a complete scheme of natural religion, fit to be proposed to the world for their instruction, in which they should all agree, which even the Philosophers themselves in their discourses on these subjects did not. The exercise of this gift shewed a divine interposition ; for what could be more wonderful than that twelve or fourteen illiterate men should give a scheme of natural religion more complete than any one particular Philosopher ever did ; and that they should be instructed all of a sudden in those points, of which before they were ignorant, or concerning which they had the common mistakes of their countrymen ?

By this gift of wisdom, the Apostles proposed one uniform scheme of religion, consistent with itself, and agreeable to all former revelations, the same every where : which otherwise could never have been.

(1.) Not from imposture, for the distance of the places where they preached would hinder

hinder their caballing ; or if they agreed before their departure from Jerusalem, how could they hit on a scheme which should suit all variety of unforeseen circumstances ? besides, if they entered into such a combination, why should they still retain such a value for their dead master, whose name was hated every where, as to list themselves all under him, and not rather divide into parties and every one set up for himself ? And lastly, suppose there were such combinations among the twelve, what shall we say to the case of *Paul* who was not called till after Christ's resurrection, and yet taught for the main exactly the same doctrine as the rest ? He had indeed a peculiar revelation concerning receiving the idolatrous *Gentiles* to equal privileges with the *Jews*, without circumcision ; but this which he calls his *Gospel*, on the proposal of it to the *Jewish* Apostles, was admitted by them.

See what is excellently well urged to this purpose, *Essay on the several dispensations, &c.* in the *Preface*, pag. 24.

(2.) Nor from Enthusiasm ; if it were possible that by mere chance a number of Enthusiasts might have some resemblance to each other in the schemes they proposed, yet that there should be not the least clashing or interfering in their schemes, no difference between them but what discovers

great wisdom, as arising from different circumstances of times and persons, and which these that bring the last revelation, are able to make great use of in their own favour, that these latter Enthusiasts should not only be able to offer a sense of a former revelation, which makes it perfectly consistent with the latter, which shews one wise design regularly carried on by several steps, and at last completed by what these men have to offer to the world; and lastly, that this so agreeable sense they should not arbitrarily fix on the words, but shew it to be a sense they will not only bear, but seem, all things considered, to require; and then that what they build on this sense follows by just and necessary consequence: If all this can be the effect of enthusiasm, then we must be for ever at a loss how to distinguish between enthusiasm and the wisest design.

*V. G.* The Apostle shews a resemblance between the Law and the Gospel, and at the same time a disparity between them; and in that disparity the excellency of the Gospel, as the most perfect institution, which one would reasonably suppose, it being the last.

The Law had many temporal promises to virtue, and those confined to one particular people: This naturally led wise and good men,

men to expect an institution that should propose rewards to virtue equally every where, and rewards exactly proportioned to the virtue, which cannot be in a fit manner distributed in this life. Under the law political guilt was cleansed by sacrificing, chiefly by the blood of the sacrifice, once a year by the High-Priest offered up to God: But in this method of expiation there were these following imperfections.

The sacrifices were of beasts, whose blood could not purge the conscience; they were repeated every year; the High-Priest entered without the people, and not into heaven, but the Holy of Holies; whereas Christ's one sacrifice purged the conscience, he entered with it into heaven it self, and he procures eternal redemption for us.

By this analogy the Jews were more easily disposed both to understand and receive the Gospel, especially when in the points of difference it could be shewn the Gospel had the advantage; and when it had been made appear by other arguments, that both these were institutions of God; the seeing this analogy between them (like what there is in all the works of God) would naturally confirm a person in the belief of the Divinity of both.

Again,

Again, God originally designed life as the reward of righteousness. If any had been righteous, they were children of God, conformed to his moral perfections, and entitled to an inheritance from him. By sin this inheritance was lost ; but God originally designed to bestow it on the faithful. To *Abraham*, as an extraordinary instance of faith the promise was first made ; and in him to all the faithful, since he is proposed as the pattern of blessing to all nations, all being blessed in him. In like manner *Abraham's* seed is set forth as a pattern of blessing to all nations ; and subsequent prophecies describe one particular seed of *Abraham*, viz. the Messiah, as by righteousness, entitled to life himself, and by his sacrifice procuring it for all that are conformed to the image of his holiness. See *Psal.* xl. *I*. l. iii. &c. And this Messiah was *Jesus of Nazareth*, who alone for his obedience to death, was exalted to God's right hand (as he discovered by pouring out the gifts of the Holy Ghost) and received power to give eternal life. Thus we now, by virtue of the promise to *Abraham*, made known only by Christ to the *Gentiles*, become entitled to the inheritance of eternal life as children of God by that faith, which God accounts to us for righteousness, as Christ is the Son of God, and intituled to the inheritance by righteousness.

Christ

Christ has already taken possession of the inheritance (as he has shewn by pouring out the gifts of the Holy Ghost) and thus assured us that we shall by his power be at last raised to the possession of it ; be coheirs with him who is the first-born among many brethren ; and thus become children of God, by being children of the resurrection.

The Apostle gives an interpretation of some considerable parts of the Old Testament, particularly of what relates to the *Abrahamick covenant*, for which we at this distance, from comparing it with other parts of the Old Testament, can see probable evidence, abstracted from the Apostle's authority : He fairly represents the law of *Moses* relating to sacrifices, &c. and shews an analogy between that and the Gospel : And lastly, he shews how the Gospel is the perfection of all former revelations. v. g. with respect to the *Abrahamick covenant*. This gave a title to eternal life to all believers that came to the knowledge of the promise. The Messiah, the seed of *Abraham*, was to make a general publication of it, as accordingly Jesus (and no other) did, by gathering the *Gentiles* to himself.

Eternal life originally belonged only to righteousness ; 'twas therefore to be bestowed by the Messiah, who for his obedience to death was to be raised to life himself, see *Is.* liii. *Psal.* ii. and xvi. and to be

be advanced to the right hand of God, and receive power to subdue all his enemies, and thus the great enemy of mankind, him that had the power of death, *viz.* the devil, and thereby bring life again into the world. See and compare *Psal. cx. 1.* with *1 Cor. xv. 25. Heb. ii. 14, 15.* And now that Jesus of Nazareth was this Messiah is plain, because by pouring out the gifts of the Holy Ghost, he shewed that he was exalted to the right hand of God; and thus that God in reward of his obedient sufferings, had given him not only life for himself, but a power (according to the claim he made while he was on earth) of giving life to others.

Again, with respect to the expiations of the Jewish law. Here was an atonement provided for all sins, that cleansed from moral as well as ceremonial guilt; one single atonement that served all the purposes of an expiation: Christ entered not into the Holy of Holies, but into heaven it self, and there appeared in the presence of God for us; he entered not with the blood of beasts, but his own blood, (by the offering of which all the ends of government were answered) and he ever lives to make intercession for us; and is advanced to full power of bestowing on us all those blessings he has procured for us; and lastly, that he is advanced to such power, he has discovered by pouring out the gifts

gifts of the Holy Ghost. I will only add under this head, these two observations.

(1.) That this gift of wisdom affords an evidence for Christianity, which is peculiarly adapted to strengthen the argument in behalf of Christianity from its internal excellency; the wise designs of the Gospel attained by fit and proper means, give probable proof of its truth.

The claim that the first publisher of a doctrine so every way worthy of God, made to a divine mission, without the least appearance of any thing in his character to discredit it, made the divinity of his doctrine probable; and when those that were commissioned by him to spread his doctrine in the world (weak and illiterate persons) gave the world such a scheme of religion, as was most wisely adapted to the reformation of mankind, infinitely better fitted to this end than all the schemes of the philosophers; when all of a sudden they were instructed in this scheme, and became ever after perfect masters of it: This very much confirms the former argument for the divinity of this person's doctrine.

(2.) There is something in this gift of wisdom peculiarly fitted to shew that the doctrine it confirms came from God. Works of mere power might be performed by evil spirits; but that evil spirits should furnish men with the knowledge, and ability to publish

publish to the world a scheme of doctrine, in all the parts of it, the best fitted that could be to reform mankind, seems perfectly incredible.

(2.) The next gift mentioned by the Apostle is that of knowledge, which fitted some to be Prophets in the Christian Church.

By this they had a skill in interpreting the Old Testament, particularly the prophecies of it, and shewing their fulfilment in Christ; and also a knowledge of future events relating to the state of the Church in general, as the rise, progress, and fall of Antichrist, the call of the *Jews*, &c.

By this they were enabled to remove the objections of the *Jews* against the Gospel, from the sufferings of Christ, &c. to shew the uniform design of God from the beginning in his several revelations; by representing the resemblance between the two institutions of the Law and Gospel, to dispose the *Jews* to the more ready receiving the Gospel, to draw arguments in favour of the Gospel *a pari*; and in points where there is a difference between them, to shew that the advantage lies on the side of the Christian institution.

This gift is easily discovered to be divine, since the prophecies particularly, relating to the call of the *Gentiles* were otherwise understood by Christ's disciples even after his

resurrection, than they were interpreted by them afterwards, with evidence sufficient to convince any reasonable minds; since the receiving the idolatrous *Gentiles* on the same foot with the *Jews* was a doctrine peculiarly committed to St. *Paul*, who had not conversed with our Saviour during his ministry, but received this doctrine from him after his resurrection, and was enabled to shew it to be the doctrine of the Old Testament, as his fellow Apostles afterwards agreed, tho' at first they did not understand these things. Since such an interpretation of the prophecies as should shew it God's design from the beginning to call the *Gentiles*, and receive them on the same terms with the *Jews*, bears on it all the characters of rectoral wisdom, justice, and goodness, and agrees admirably to God's dealings with mankind before the law, and to the design of the *Abrahamick* covenant; since the representing one uniform wise and good design in the Law and the Gospel, points at one wise and good author of both: And thus as under the former head, we may observe how beautifully the external evidence from the gifts of the Holy Ghost coincides with, and strengthens the internal evidence from the moral fitness of things.

The uniformity in all the several revelations of God, and the last of them perfecting the design of the rest, seems to shew they

are not the contrivances of Enthusiasts; and since there is other evidence to shew the persons that proposed this uniform scheme were not impostors, and yet they pretended a divine mission, 'tis probable their doctrine was divine; and this is very much strengthened by this consideration, that they were all of a sudden enlightened with the knowledge of this uniformity in God's several revelations, and enabled to make this out by good arguments, and to bring convincing proof of such a sense of some main parts of the Old Testament, as was contrary to all their former opinions.

By the word of knowledge the Prophets of the Christian Church foretold certain great events, the like to which had never been; such as there was no state of things at that time in the world which could lead them to form a conjecture about and this with the utmost particularity, as the rise, progress, and fall of Antichrist; and 'twas necessary there should be such prophecies to obviate the objection against Christianity from such corruptions of it, to preserve persons from deception by the miracles of Antichrist; and lastly, to support those that should feel the unhappy effects of his power.

And as it appears that things thus foretold could not fall within the compass of human sagacity, which can only guess at futurities from

from the likeness to past events, or from the present visible situation of affairs; so these predictions answering so wise and good an end of Providence, seem to direct us to ascribe them not to evil spirits, but to the great author and governor of the universe.

(3.) A firmness in believing and professing the doctrines of Christianity, fitting men to be teachers. This was necessary for the spreading the one uniform scheme of doctrine of the Apostles.

(4.) The gift of healing; that is, a power of a sudden, without application of means of curing distempers, either that come on persons in the common course of Providence, or that are inflicted in an extraordinary manner for some sin they have committed, as in consequence of an act of discipline of the Church, &c. upon the prayer of faith which was inspired by the spirit. See and compare *Job.* xiv. 13. xv. 7. *Mat.* xvii. 20. *Luke* xvii. 6. *Mat.* xviii. 19. *Jude* 19, 20. *Eph.* vi. 18. *James* v. 14—19. *I Cor.* v. 5. xi. 30. As this power of healing proceeded from the prayer of faith inspired by the spirit, who taught the inspired on whom to exercise it, and probably also increased their fervour in asking it; so 'tis distinguished as one of the illuminating gifts from mere works of power called by the Apostle δύναμες, by which I understand an ability of doing great and astonishing

nishing things above human power, and out of the common course of things; such as were Christ's multiplying the loaves, stilling the winds and waves, casting out devils, &c. these seem of an inferior kind, and common to false prophets and true. This gift of healing was of peculiar use.

(1.) As it was a very beneficial one, discovered the goodness of its author, and inclined persons to a favourable hearing of his doctrine.

(2.) As 'twas necessary to remove those distempers which were inflicted by a very useful act of discipline in the Church, on some sorts of offenders, when the end for which they were inflicted was answered.

(3.) Because God had frequently interposed under the *Mosaick* economy to cure the diseases of his people, as being the great physician of *Israel*. See 2 Chron. xvi. 12. Com. Jer. viii. 22. xlvi. 11. with Ja. v.

(4.) The next gift was *dúrauels*, or the ability of performing great and astonishing works above human power, and out of the common course of things; such a power was necessary,

(1.) To raise the attention of the vulgar to a wise and holy doctrine.

(2.) It contains a probable proof of a doctrine's coming from God, i. e. 'tis a good proof till something appears in the doctrine;

or in superiority of power opposing it, that shews it cannot come from God.

(3.) The two grand divisions of mankind, at that time, *Jews* and *Gentiles*, pretended to this power; so that Christianity could never have supported it self against these two without it.

(6.) Prophecy, under which these following things are included: 1. The power of fore-telling lesser events, such as the dearth at *Jerusalem*, &c. which was very necessary for the answering particular emergencies of the Church, and to make Christianity appear superior to *Heathenism*, which made great pretensions to prophecy, in its several oracles, &c. 2. An ability to edify the Church by exhortations in a known language, composed prayers for the use of the Church, Psalms set to tune, &c. This gift was absolutely necessary for the well ordering the publick worship amongst a multitude of mean and illiterate persons, and but just instructed in this religion. 3. Of discovering the secrets of an infidel come into an assembly of Christians (which case it may be supposed from the common curiosity of mankind would very often happen) a gift very useful for the conviction of Infidels, and so enlarging the Church.

(7.) The power of discerning who are fit for any office in the Church. *1 Tim.* iv.

14. And as 'twas a matter of great consequence to this new spiritual kingdom, who were publick officers in it, so a skill to discern (which 'tis not to be supposed mean and illiterate persons would have of themselves) who had knowledge, courage, faithfulness, fitting them for offices, was very necessary.

(8.) The gift of tongues which was necessary for spreading this new religion in the world by twelve or fourteen mean illiterate persons. This gift seems to discover the power of God, enlarging the mind to take in so great a variety of ideas; for as words are merely arbitrary signs of ideas, 'tis impossible a person can in a natural way understand a language he never learnt. If it be said, that without that he may appear to speak the language, since superior spirits good or bad may cause such vibrations in the air, as we commonly make by the organs of speech: I answer, this cheat would easily be discovered, when the Apostles pretended to bestow this as a standing gift on one that had embraced Christianity, and appealed to him for the truth of it, as the Apostle does to the *Corinthians* experience of a gift of the Holy Ghost, by which they understood what was spoken in strange languages. *1 Cor. xiv. 4.*

(9.) A power of interpreting in an easy and agreeable manner what is spoken in a strange language, which was necessary to

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make what had been spoken for the conviction of Infidels useful to the Church.

(10.) The gift of presiding in their assemblies, directing who should speak, and how their gifts should be exercised, somewhat like the Rulers of Synagogues office among the *Jews*. See *1 Thess. v. 12.* Com. *Acts* xiii. 15. xvii. 1. Now as there was a variety of gifts exercised in their assemblies, and as it was natural for each one to prefer his own, and be fond of discovering it; so it was necessary for publick order that there should be a President who should direct what gifts should be exercised, and in what order.

(2.) I come next to shew the superiority of this evidence to all other evidence, particularly that of the miracles of Christ.

(1.) Then, the gifts of the Holy Ghost discover a greater power, than the miracles of Christ and a few of his followers while on earth, as there was a greater number of persons to whom these powers were communicated; as these powers were greater in themselves, and seemed to discover the hand of God in enlarging the capacity of the mind, to take in all of a sudden so great a variety of knowledge, and to become from thence forward perfect master of it, and able to use so rich a fund on all occasions. Let us consider only the case of *Paul*. Besides the intire frame of Christian doctrine, which

he

he understood, and could shew the connection of all its parts, and the wise design of the whole, and the relation it bare to former revelations, besides his great knowledge of future events relating to changes in kingdoms, and in the Church; he appeals to the *Corinthian* Church's knowledge of his speaking with tongues more than they all, who came behind other Churches in no gift, and particularly excelled in that.

(2.) These gifts were just such as were wanting in order to spread and settle Christianity in the world. In order to spread only morality in the world, there must have been natural abilities in some measure answering to these gifts; and yet these would not be sufficient thoroughly to accomplish that end, and could not in any tolerable manner execute it, without such a number of persons so qualified and disposed as can't be reasonably expected; but now these gifts of the Holy Ghost do at once answer all these ends, and at the same time establish the Divinity of the doctrine they are brought to vouch; and thus there appears all the wisdom in this appointment that can possibly be.

(3.) By being confined to believers of Christianity (whereas miraculous powers were claimed, and perhaps with justice by men of all religions) and given in various degrees, immediately, and in greatest plen-

ty to the Apostles, who were chief ministers of Christ's Kingdom, and chosen witnesses of his resurrection; in the next degree, and also immediately to the 120 brethren, the first converts among the Jews; then to the first converts among both the devout and idolatrous *Gentiles* to mark them out for God's people as well as the believing Jews; and lastly, conferred, according to the necessities of the Church, on the several members of it in various proportions and measures, by the Apostles only and at their prayer, to which imposition of hands belonged as a ceremony; by all this, I say, 'tis shewn there was a particular direction of Providence in their distribution.

(4.) The continually experiencing in themselves, as the several members of the body the Church did, in the first age of the Gospel, some one or more of these gifts was an admirable preservative against apostacy, to which the persecutions they met with did so violently tempt them; and also was the fittest means of securing the Apostles authority, in opposition to those false Apostles that indeavoured to undermine it, when the Apostles could appeal not merely to *transient* miracles wrought amongst them (in which 'tis probable the false Apostles might pretend to vie with them to the deception of the unwary) but to standing gifts of illumination which the persons to whom he makes his appeal

appeal experienced at that very time in themselves, and which they could not deny they received from the Apostles only; and thus the one uniform, pure, and uncorrupt doctrine of Christ committed to the Apostles, was by them transmitted to the Church; and thus particularly the purity of the Gospel in one main branch of it, *viz.* the grand term of acceptance with God, whether observance of the law, or faith in the Messiah, was preserved, since St. *Paul* could appeal to the Churches among whom he had preached, whether he (by whose hands they received the Spirit) taught the former or the latter doctrine, whether they received the Spirit whilst under the law, or after their receiving the doctrine of faith.

(5.) These gifts seem to have been sudden illuminations of the mind, see *Acts* ii. 4. x. 46. xix. 6. immediately imparting to men of mean capacities and low education, that knowledge which could be got by men of the best parts and education, but by slow degrees in a natural way, and sometimes not at all in that way.

(6.) They continued with persons as a constant fund of knowledge which they could use on all proper occasions. See *1 Cor.* xiv. throughout.

(7.) They were bestowed on the several members of the Church in distant parts, and in the most populous and best civilized ci-

ties, whereas Christ's miracles were confined to *Judea*. For a farther account of these gifts see the first Essay of the *Miscellanea Sacra*.

## C H A P. XVII.

*Of prophecies of the Messiah accomplished in Jesus as direct proofs of his being the Messiah.*

**O**N this head, as before on that of miracles, I shall take my rise from the easiest and plainest principles.

(1.) Then, there was a wise design in the frame of the *Mosaick dispensation*, viz. to separate the posterity of *Abraham* for the preserving the pure worship of one God in the world, and to be depositaries of the grand promise before made to *Abraham* of one of his seed, in whom all nations of the earth should be blessed.

(2.) Prophets were raised up from time to time in the *Jewish Church*, to revive the memory of this grand promise, and secure the accomplishment of it by the promise of intermediate blessings, of which they should reap immediately the benefit, to put men in mind of the moral duties they were obliged

ed to, and prevent their too eager pursuit of ceremonies; and lastly, to keep them steady to the worship of one only true God by predicting to them the great events of their nation, and so shewing them that their happiness or misery depended on his favour.

(3.) Their writings, as they have a good design, so they are well framed for the reaching it, being full of good sense, and clear, strong reasonings on several important points of natural religion and morality.

(4.) They were not men that aimed at worldly interest, but boldly reproved the vices of the great men of their time, by which means they procured their hatred; and some of them suffered the dismal effects of it. And yet,

(5.) Their writings by the mere force of the evidence of their prophetick character fully established by the clearest accomplishments of prophecies, have been all along received in the *Jewish Church*, even tho' containing the smartest rebukes of the vices of their ancestors, laying down principles of religion, particularly with relation to the preference of moral duties to ceremonies, directly opposite to their prevailing tenets, and containing descriptions of the Messiah as a suffering Saviour, and that should receive the *Gentiles* without proselyting them

to

to the law, contrary to all their traditionaly doctrines.

(6.) The Prophets in their writings have fixed a time for the accomplishment of the most distinguishing characters of the Messiah, *viz.* his voluntary sufferings, with a declared design to promote the salvation of *all* mankind; his resurrection and advancement to his Kingdom discovered by gathering the *Gentiles* to him, and the time thus fixed was before, and but a little before the final destruction of the *Jewiſh* state.

(7.) Jesus of *Nazareth* appeared within this period, at the very time when the prophecies of the *Messiah* had raised an expectation of his coming. He directed men to look for the *Messiah*, by proclaiming the kingdom of heaven at hand. He taught an holy doctrine, wrought innumerable miracles, on the force of these pretended a divine mission; then in prophetick language claimed to be the *Messiah*, and appealed to his miracles for the justice of his claim. He claimed to be the person in whom, as none of the characters of the *Messiah* that could yet appear were found wanting, so the most distinguishing characters of the *Messiah*, relating to voluntary sufferings for the sins of men, his resurrection, pouring out the Spirit, and call of the *Gentiles* should even within one age appear.

(8.) Some

(8.) Some time after Christ's Death, his Apostles appear with the power of miracles confirming their divine mission, they claim the distinguishing characters of the Messiah mentioned above for their master, they explain the sense of the prophecies relating to these matters, and make out that sense to the reason and understanding of men ; they offered evidence (of which we are even now judges) that that was the sense of those prophecies which were exactly fulfilled in Jesus, had been in no other, and the time being elapsed, could possibly be hereafter fulfilled in no other ; they shewed how by a miracle in his favour, which was an accomplishment of a sign he himself gave in proof of his mission, *viz.* his resurrection, *the seemingly opposite*, but equally clear and most *distinguishing* characters of the Messiah were shewn to be united in him, I mean his voluntary sufferings with a declared design to promote the salvation of men, and his perpetual kingdom, the former of which this miracle of his resurrection assures us has effectually promoted its designed end ; and to the latter, it was as it were the first step.

(9.) Christ and his Apostles have predicted such a state of things both with respect to the *Jewiſh* nation, and the Church to be gathered in latter ages, its increase and corruption ; as was contrary to all appear-

ances of things at that time, but as we see to this day so exactly answered by events, that in their prophecies one reads an exact history of those great events, those most amazing events, to which there had been never any thing like before in the world, so as we ourselves do behold them.

(10.) The past conversions of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, which in the manner in which they were brought about could not be without miracles, are earnests of the bringing in at last the fulness of both.

(11.) Besides these mentioned, the principal remaining prophecies relate to the peace, purity, &c. of the Church in latter days. Now nothing can be more credible than the accomplishment of these some time or other, if the frame of the Christian religion so admirably adapted to promote these ends, and which would, if it were not for the influence of some foreign causes, necessarily effect them, be considered.

*Corol.* 1. That prophecies are of a quite distinct consideration from miracles, and are brought to prove a quite different thing, *viz.* not Christ's divine Mission, but Messiahship, and of that they are the only proper *direct* proof. He that says Jesus is the Messiah, says he is the Person to whom the distinguishing characters of the Messiah do agree, and then the appeal is directly made

made to facts, what are these characters of the Messiah, where to be found, how to be understood; what are the circumstances of Jesus's Life, &c. do they answer these characters or not? See on this head what Mr. *Chandler* has advanced in his answer to the *Grounds*, who is the only writer that has stated this particular argument with sufficient clearness and accuracy.

*Corol. 2.* That accomplishment of prophecies could only be urged to those that knew the prophecies; therefore could not be mentioned to *Gentiles*, who without them received Christianity on its proper evidence.

*Corol. 3.* That however, they might afterwards be made sensible of the agreement of the most distinguishing characters of the Messiah to Jesus, and so see the direct evidence of his Messiahship.

(4.) That it ought not to have stumbled them, if while no characters of the Messiah that they could see clearly in the Old Testament were wanting in Jesus, they who became so lately acquainted with *Jewish* books, could not see the evidence for all interpretations the Apostles (whom they had reason to prefer, as interpreters to the infidel *Jews*) put on these writings.

(5.) We at this distance of time may attain sufficient understanding of the most distinguishing characters of the Messiah in the

the *Jewish* books, so as from thence to discern direct evidence for Jesus's Messiahship; thus we have clear prophecies in our hands, and authentick histories of their accomplishment relating to Christ's voluntary sufferings, resurrection and call of *Gentiles*; which, as Mr. *Chandler* very judiciously observes, are the only prophecies from the accomplishment of which the Apostles ever argue *Jesus's* Messiahship.

(6.) Distance of time will necessarily create obscurity in prophecies, and therefore may easily shew us, that even though the prophecies were rightly applied by Christ and the Apostles, yet we may not now be able to see evidence for it.

(7.) But on the other hand length of time brings this convenience, that it shews the fulfilment of prophecies that were not before fulfilled; and considered in this light the argument of prophecies continually gathers strength; the accomplishment of the prophecies relating to the *Jews*, and corruptions of the Christian Church, which were antient predictions of *Moses*, *Daniel*, and again afresh given by Christ and the Apostles, may be considered as so many signs of the accomplishment of what remains; and as in successive ages, new characters of the Messiah's kingdom come to open and shew themselves, new evidence will arise

to that person's Messiahship to whom all these characters do agree.

Until at length in the conclusion of things, when the scene of Providence relating to this our earth in its present state shall be over, the predictions of the Messiah become a plain history of him for whom the character was designed, and of him only ; and an history of events the most miraculous in the world ; since so many particular characters, even tho' singly they could be supposed to imply no miracle, cannot all agree to one only person in the world, among all that ever lived in it, without a miracle : And this shews how the argument for Christianity from prophecies coincides with that of miracles.

## C H A P. XVIII.

### *Of the Objection against the Christian Religion from the Prophecies.*

**W**HAT use is to be made of the prophecies of the Old Testament in proof of the Christian religion, how far the argument from thence in favour of our religion is really valid and conclusive, what it directly proves, and was designed as the proper evidence of, I have already largely shewn;

shewn; it is fit now that we consider what attacks we are liable to from this quarter, what use has or may be made of this argument by an adversary, how far what is advanced on that head is really fact, or if true fact how far to the purpose, as either weakening our evidence, or producing counter-evidence : The consideration of this matter will be the subject of the following Chapter. And here I must premise, that I do not reckon myself obliged to vindicate the weaknesses and follies of particular writers on this head ; if any have supposed that plain histories and laws besides their open and obvious sense have I know not what secret, mystical meaning, very cunningly lying hid under them ; that almost every event of former ages was designed to prefigure something or other in the age of the Messiah ; that because our Saviour and the Apostles represent *Moses*, *David* and the Prophets as foretelling the Messiah, which is most certainly true, since the most eminent characters of the Messiah run thro' all the writings of the Old Testament ; therefore every ceremony of the law, every remarkable circumstance in *David's* life, which he takes notice of in the Psalms ; and every prophecy in the Old Testament, at least that is any way remarkable, have a farther reference to the Messiah ; that an argument may be drawn for Jesus's being the

the Messiah from the agreement of *particular* prophetick characters to him no ways *distinguishing*, that an argument from the prophecies may be formed in this manner against a Deist, *viz.* this is the sense of the prophecy, otherwise what sense can be put upon it ? or thus, in this manner was the prophecy fulfilled, or we are to understand it has been fulfilled, how else shall we make out that it has ever or can ever have an accomplishment ? that it is plain Jesus was the Messiah from the agreement of those, it must be owned *clear* and *distinguishing*, but then *few* prophecies of the Messiah relating to his voluntary sufferings, resurrection, &c. to him, though he should for ever want the as *clear* and *distinguishing*, and vastly *more numerous* prophetick characters relating to his glorious kingdom in the latter days, a pure, peaceful and universal kingdom, composed of the fulness of the *Gentiles*, and the *Jews* brought together from all parts of the world and restored to their own land. I am not sensible that one who vindicates only pure and original Christianity is at all concerned with these things.

These weak assertions of particular writers on this subject have been the great stumbling blocks in the way of rational persons receiving the Gospel ; but as all such kind of things have nothing to do with the merits

of the cause, they ought to be carefully separated from it.

The *real* difficulty then, separated from all these perfectly foreign considerations is twofold.

1. That some, and those the most *eminent* and *distinguishing* characters of the Messiah, relating to the deliverance of the *Jews*, their restoration, &c. have been found wanting in Jesus ; but to this the answer is very easy. For,

(1.) By his *miracles*, he proved that he was *authorized* by God to fulfil all those prophecies which it was said the Messiah should fulfil.

(2.) So far was it from being true that Jesus was proved not to be the Messiah, because at *his first appearing*, he was despised and rejected of the *Jews*, and they were rejected of God, their city and *sanctuary* destroyed, and they carried captives into all nations ; that these things were expressly prophesied of as to happen at the Messiah's first appearing ; so that just on the contrary, if these things had not so happened, he had not been the Messiah.

(3.) It is demonstrable therefore, that since all these seemingly opposite characters are in the Old Testament united in one person, there must be two appearances of the Messiah, at which two different appearances, he may easily be conceived as fulfilling them all.

(4.) Those

(4.) Those relating to his voluntary sufferings, &c. which have been fulfilled in Jesus, are some of the *distinguishing* characters of the Messiah, which therefore point him out for that person that shall fulfil all the rest.

(5.) There is not the least inconsistency in those different characters ; a destruction of a people at one time is not at all inconsistent with their deliverance at another ; a temporal deliverer of a particular people, and a spiritual Saviour of all *men*, are very consistent characters ; a prophet sent to the same people at different times may easily be supposed to have very different treatment.

(6.) Many of these *different* characters, are so far from being *opposite* and *inconsistent*, that they are the *one* necessary to be supposed, in order to the fulfilment of the other. Thus, the restoration of the *Jews* to their own land from all parts of the world, supposes their having been carried captives out of their own land, and dispersed into all quarters of the world, and the *one* of these is as expressly prophecied of in the Old Testament, and as to happen at the coming of the Messiah, as the other ; and the *one* of these actually falling out in exact agreement with prophecies given at a time when no like event had ever happened in the world, when there was no

probability of such an event from the then appearance of things in the world, and in such a manner as seemed to discover some peculiar interposition of divine Providence, may be considered as a *sign* of the accomplishment of the other. The *Jews* being received by God after their revolt and rejection plainly supposes that revolt and rejection; the *Jews* mourning for the Messiah, as one whom they had pierced, plainly supposes that they once had so pierced him, and since that could not be then, when they are represented as receiving him with all the marks of joy as their deliverer, it must have been in some time past, at another appearance of his to them.

(7.) Our Saviour has by their fulfilment in himself, and this not without a plainly miraculous interposition of providence, *viz.* by his resurrection to which, while on earth he appealed as the sign of his divine mission, shewn the *possibility* of the fulfilment in the same person of the *seemingly* most *opposite* characters of the Messiah, *viz.* suffering death, and yet *reigning for ever*.

(8.) As to other pretended characters of the Messiah, before you can argue against Jesus's Messiahship from his wanting them, you must *clearly* shew that they are characters of the Messiah, and then that they will not fairly admit of a sense which shall agree to Jesus.

2. The other branch of the objection against Christianity from the prophecies is this ;

It is pretended that Christ and the Apostles have misunderstood the Old Testament, either interpreting those passages as prophetic of the Messiah which really were not so, or putting false senses on them with relation to the Messiah and his kingdom. But to this I answer ;

1. It is a very just, as well as very judicious observation of Mr. Chandler, that our Saviour never *directly* applies any prophecies to himself as containing marks of his Messiahship, but those relating to his voluntary sufferings, resurrection on the third day, pouring out the spirit, as the proof of his advancement to an *universal* kingdom. These were *distinguishing* characters of the Messiah; and accordingly our Saviour foretels the appearance of these in himself, and refers those that should see them (as those he spoke to soon would) to these, as the tests to try his Messiahship by, and in these prophecies he instructed his Apostles before his ascension; it being necessary they should have such instruction from him in order to manage these as proper direct arguments of his Messiahship to the *Jews*. See to this purpose *Mat.* xvi. 21. *Luke* xxiv. 44,--49. *Mat.* xxvi. 54. *Mark* ix. 12.

Besides these, our Saviour is supposed to apply to himself several other prophecies, which I shall therefore here particularly consider. It is said, that (*Luke* iv. 18.) he applies the characters of the Messiah (*Isa.* lxi.) to himself; now as that does indeed seem a prophecy of the Messiah, and was in its *due time* therefore to be fulfilled by our Saviour, in the sense intended by the Prophet, which plainly relates to the deliverance of the *Jews* from their captivity, I will not deny that our Saviour might *possibly intimate* that he was that person there pointed at by the prophet; but then it is certain, that the events our Saviour there refers to were different, tho' *similar* events to those the prophet had in his view, and our Saviour does not *expressly declare*, that he was the person the prophet had in his view as designed to fulfil the events mentioned; and therefore if upon a strict critical Enquiry it should be found that *Isaiah* lxi. does not refer at all to the Messiah, this does not in the least affect our Saviour's character.

The prophecy in *Mal.* iii. and iv. our Saviour does indeed *indirectly* apply to himself, by making *John* who was his forerunner, the *Elias* there described. And this he does on very good grounds; for,

i.) Having established his divine mission by miracles, he had a right to apply the characters of the Messiah to himself, and

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all those evidences he gave of his being the Messiah, were so many evidences of John's being the *Elias* that was to come.

2.) It must be owned the actions in that prophecy ascribed to the messenger, and to the person to come into the temple, do not suit the first coming of Christ, but neither does our Saviour ever intimate this; he only says *John* was the *Elias* to come; but then as 'tis plain there are to be two appearances of the Messiah himself, so nothing hinders but there may be two appearances of his fore-runner too.

3.) Tho' our Saviour says that *John* was the *Elias* to come before the appearing of the Messiah; and that therefore the Jews were mistaken in their reasonings that the Messiah was not come, because *Elias* was not come; yet does he not in the least intimate that there was no other coming of (the intended) *Elias*, to be expected, any more than that there was no other coming of the Messiah to be expected, or that the *Elias* prophesied of had fully accomplished his work, as described by the Prophet, any more than the Messiah had his; but just the contrary as to every one of these particulars. See *Mat.* xvii. 11. compare *Mark* ix. 12. *Acts* iii. 21. *Mat.* xix. 28.

In the references our Saviour makes, *Mat.* xxi. 42—45, to several passages, particularly to *Ps.* cxviii. it can't be denied but

he that might *intimate* he was the person there pointed at; and I think it very probable that he was; but then as he does not assert this, and the supposing our Saviour only to design *an argument à simili* makes his discourse very strong and rational; this can with no justice be reckoned an instance of his applying prophetick characters to himself; tho' if his argument be direct, as it may, since *Psal. cxviii.* may easily be supposed to belong to the Messiah, it will stand yet clearer thus, tho' the Messiah be, as is prophesied of *Psal. cxviii.* rejected by the great men among the *Jews*, yet God will make him as a corner-stone to unite and support the intire building of this Church, consisting now of believers from among the *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*; and therefore the kingdom must be taken from you and given to others.

Our Saviour's reference *Jo. xv. 25.* to *Psf. lxix. 4.* may very easily and fairly be understood as only an allusion; thus *ver. 24.* *If I had not done among them the works that none other man did, they had not had sin, but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.* But (here is an ellipsis, which I supply thus;) I performed these works among them, that the word might be fulfilled which is written in their law; i. e. that as they are of the most obstinate and perverse temper, opportunity might

might be given them fully to discover themselves to be such men as the *Psalmit* speaks of, who hated him without a cause, and that thus they might be left wholly inex-  
cusable.

*John xvii. 12.* our Saviour refers to a prophecy, which no where now appears; but as it contained no distinguishing characters of the Messiah, and therefore was not necessary to be preserved, (whereas those that did have been by a wonderful Providence of God preserved, and in a very great measure of purity; and this, tho' passing thro' the hands of the *Jews*, whose traditional notions contrary to them might have led them either to drop or corrupt them,) so nothing can be concluded from the reference our Saviour makes to it, that will in the least touch his character as the true Messiah.

2. As Christ himself lay the proof of his Messiahship on those prophecies *only*, which contained *distinguishing* marks of him, and as even we at this distance are capable of seeing the evidence from them, for Jesus being the Messiah; so these are the prophecies from which *alone* the Apostles are represented in the *Acts* as arguing with the *Jews*; and this in direct contradiction to their own former notions, which they retained even all the time of our Saviour's ministry, and 'till the instruction he is represented

sented by St. Luke as giving them in the interval between his resurrection and final ascension, in the prophecies of the Messiah, particularly those relating to those great events of his sufferings, resurrection, and call of the *Gentiles*. In this interval, our Saviour is represented as ordering them to tarry at *Jerusalem* 'till they should be endowed with the gifts of the Spirit, that should fit them for the spreading his doctrine in the world; after which gifts were poured on them, as they discovered by speaking in all varieties of languages, they very readily explained these prophecies relating to the Messiah's sufferings, &c. and powerfully inforced the sense they put on them quite opposite to their former sentiments; which facts seem very much to strengthen and support each other, and all together to be a very clear proof of the Apostles interpretations of these prophecies, and of the conclusiveness of their arguments from thence for Jesus being the Messiah.

3. From what has been said it appears, that as Jesus had proved his divine mission by miracles, and so the justice of the claim he made to be that person by whom God designed, in their propertimes, to fulfil all those glorious things he had promised to fulfil by the Messiah; so, the Apostles had now directly to the Jews proved Jesus to be the *Messiah*,

*Messiah*, by the agreement of the most distinguishing characters of the Messiah in him ; and as these *alone* were necessary to be fully understood in order to the Apostles arguing with the *Jews*, so their not mistaking these fully acquires their characters, and shews them fit not only to be *witnesses of facts*, but *testifiers of Christ's doctrine*, which they were enabled also to confirm by its *proper evidence*,

4. Supposing therefore they should mistake in the sense they put on any other parts of the Old Testament, this does not seem directly to affect the cause of Christianity. Miracles only prove what they are brought to prove. Now the Apostles by their miracles never pretended to establish their characters as infallible interpreters of the intire Old Testament.

The Apostles do indeed, as our Saviour had done before them, speak of the Messiah as referred to in the law, the Psalms and the Prophets, which is certainly true on that supposition only, which I will thank no man for granting me, *viz.* that some of the most eminent characters of the Messiah do run thro' the whole Old Testament.

5. As to those passages of the Old Testament which you may imagine the Apostles have mistaken; before you can prove this, you must show they do not quote these passages you think they refer to as prophecies, sometimes.

times only by way of allusion; and at other times that when they do argue, their arguments are not *a pari*, both which I shall in another place show to be very often the case.

6. But if you could do this, it would not overturn Christianity, since the positive evidence for Jesus being a Prophet from his doctrine and miracles, and the Prophet particularly described in the Old Testament from his agreement with the most distinguishing characters of him, produced and urged to excellent purpose by the Apostles, remains in full force.

7. The saying *you do not see the evidence* for the Apostles interpretations is no proof there *originally* was no such evidence. There are several things may easily be supposed to concur, which will fully account for the many difficulties we labour under, with respect to the prophecies, without supposing the Apostles mistook in their interpretations of them. As

1.) Sometimes the prophecies referr'd to may be lost, and then no wonder we can't make out the truth of the Apostles quotations, when he have not those parts of the books which they do quote. But then it ought to be remembered, that as for want of those books we don't see the truth of their quotations; So for the same reason we can't see the falsehood of them; possibly of this kind

kind of quotations may that be, which has cost divines so much pains to account for, he shall be called a *Nazarene*; and I think, certainly that to which our Saviour refers. *John xvii. 12.*

2.) Sometimes the prophecies may be misplaced, and out of their true order.

Thus, as I have shewn in the review, very probably *Psal. lxxviii. 1—3.* was originally part of a prophecy of *Isaiah*; and learned men have shewn that there is great reason to think some part of *Zachary*, as we have it in our present copies, originally belonged to the prophecy of *Jeremiah*, which may account in some measure for the Evangelist's quoting the one for the other, *Mat. xxvii. 9.*

3.) Some errors may easily thro' the mere negligence of transcribers (which the Providence of God was not concerned to prevent) be supposed in the course of so many ages to have crept into the present copies; some of these we have great reason to suspect from the differences of the antient versions, particularly the lxx. from our present copies, and very often have helps from thence for correcting them, by shewing us how they read in their better copies. See instances of this nature *Is. xxviii. 16. Amos ix. 12. Habak. ii. 3, 4. Jer. xxxi. 32. Hos. xiv. 2.*

4.) Our

4.) Our not seeing the evidence for the Apostles interpretations may proceed from want of skill in the language, customs, &c. of ages and countries so distant from our own.

## CHAP. XIX.

*A method proposed for a more particular consideration of the difficulty relating to the prophecies.*

THE method which the ingenious Author of the *Grounds*, &c. has taken, has thrown his adversaries into some difficulties; every one sees what he really aims at, and what is the character which truly belongs to him, *viz.* a disbeliever, or, as I hope, only a doubter concerning revelation; but this character he must not openly assume, he therefore throughout his work personates an allegorical Christian; he puts on, in many places at least, an air of respect towards the books of the Old Testament; he is only enquiring after the sense of these books; these books he finds, contrary to the opinion of many divines, very plain and intelligible books, and relating to things of which men may have a clear apprehension,

without over refined or spiritual notions. He takes what we call the prophecies of the Messiah in their plain and natural sense to refer to private persons, as *David, Solomon, Hezekiah, or Cyrus*. Indeed these things are otherwise represented in the New Testament; but there these passages of the Old Testament are explained, not according to the *literal* sense, but in a *mystical* and *allegorical* way; but however the Apostles draw arguments from *their sense* of the Old Testament prophecies for Jesus *being the Messiah*, or (which with him is the same,) for his *doctrine being divine*; and what sort of arguments those must be, and how well supported Christianity must be (which can have no other support than what the Apostles gave it) he cares not to say, being unwilling to drop any thing harsh concerning the religion of his country, but he leaves you to judge.

Now it has happened very unluckily that the principal answerer of the *Grounds* has really argued with him, as a believer in the ancient prophecies, but putting such a sense on them as does not suit the Messiah, or agreeing to the Messiah is not applicable to Jesus; and the whole of his reasoning generally comes to no more than this: This must be the meaning of what I call *a prophecy* in *Isaiah*, supposes *Jeremy, &c.* otherwise what sense can be put  
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on it ? what sense will the words possibly bear but this ? how was the prophecy ever fulfilled, if not in the sense I put on it) whom can it agree to, or in whom can it from this time forward be ever fulfilled, if it has not been already fulfilled in our Jesus ? now the answer of a Deist to all this is very easy.

There is really no such thing as what you call prophecy ; prudent men may guess at things to come, and according to the degrees of their prudence, or their knowledge of past events and present circumstances of affairs, their conjectures will have more or less certainty.

Knavish and designing men may pretend to communications with heaven, and thus give out what they call divine oracles ; but then, these are ever framed in covert and ambiguous language, so as to screen the authors of them from the imputation of imposture, whatever the event should be. But if any of these which you call prophecies are really clear, direct and determinate, they are not predictions, but relations of what is already past. That thus, what you call prophecies in the Old Testament are only such prudent guesses as have been just now mentioned, or predictions so general and ambiguous that there is no fear but *some time or other*, in *some sense or other*, they will meet with a very agreeable

able accomplishment. And very likely *many* an accomplishment in *very different persons*, at *very different times*, and all *equally agreeable* to some sense or other of which the words are very easily and fairly capable, as many of the writers on this head seem to think, and accordingly triumph in it as a wonderful advantage to the cause of religion.

Or, lastly, If what you call prophecies are really framed in language plain and direct, and refer not to such general things as may agree to *many persons*, at *different times*, &c. but are pinned down to certain times, persons, and particular events that cannot often happen, then these are not prophecies, but histories of what the writers had seen actually come to pass.

Now in order to answer this, you must go to the bottom of the controversy. You must shew that there is such a thing as a prophetick spirit; that many events have been foretold nothing like to which, from which a person could have a notion of them, had ever happened; events which there was nothing in the then circumstances of things that could lead a person to form a conjecture about; that there have been some predictions that have in clear and determinate language pointed at *particular events* to be performed by *particular persons*, whose names are even sometimes mentioned, and

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this within *a particular* determinate time from the date of the prophecy; that a kingdom has, *throughout the whole Old Testament*, been described, like to which no kingdom had ever appeared, a kingdom of a *peculiar* nature, a kingdom of *which there were then no footsteps in the world*; a kingdom so represented as not to suit the inclinations and principles of the *Jews* in most, if not *all* the ages of their state; a kingdom described as set up in such a manner, and so universally prevailing, as there were no circumstances of things then in the world that could make a person form a conjecture of it; nay as a person could not possibly form a rational conjecture of, judging according to the methods by which kingdoms are set up and prevail which owe not their rise and continuance to the *peculiar* Providence of God, as 'tis therefore intimated that should; that a time has been fixed for the setting up this kingdom; that a particular person has been pointed at as King of this kingdom, in whom the *distinguishing* characters of this King should appear, *viz.* voluntarily suffering death with a declared design to promote the salvation of men, shewing that this design was acceptable to God by rising again from the dead, and pouring out the gifts of the Spirit as the marks of his being entred on this universal kingdom: That

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Jesus of *Nazareth* appeared within the time fix'd for this glorious King's appearance: That *none besides him* appeared within that time, and could make out any thing of a claim to this kingdom: That he appeared at the time when there was, grounded on the prophecies, a general expectation of the Messiah: That he answered the most distinguishing characters of the Messiah in voluntary sufferings, resurrection, and call of the *Gentiles*: That soon after his appearance, and the discovery of him as the Messiah, by the fulfilment of the last of these characters in him, *viz.* the gathering the people to him, there was an entire dissolution of the *Jewish* state, as was antiently prophesied, *Gen. xl ix. 10.* the city and sanctuary were destroyed, and an utter desolation was brought on that people, as was prophesied *Dan. ix. 27.* *i. e.* there came on them that destruction which was from the beginning by *Moses* threatened them for their sins, *viz.* that they should be scattered into all countries of the world, and preserved a distinct people as the *monuments of divine vengeance*, *Deut. xxviii.* and as a standing evidence of the truth of the prophetick spirit, which could enable a person at the distance of so many ages to foretel an event to which there had never any thing like happened in the world; and when there were no circumstances of things

then in being, from which a person could be led to conjecture such a thing: That Jesus foretold this destruction, in exact agreement with the antient prophecies, but with circumstances much more particular and minute, and some of them such as were directly contrary to the state of things then in the world, as it must have appeared to a mere man; and that he fixed a time for the accomplishment of all this, *viz.* within that very age; which short space of time he would certainly never have fixed for the accomplishment of all these things, if he had not known that he spake by a prophetick spirit; since otherwise he knew that by the failure of his conjectures (which certainly he might easily think would fail him in some or other of these very minute circumstances) he should expose his religion, and get it intirely crushed in its very infancy: That accordingly every thing came to pass exactly, in the minutest circumstances, as our Saviour foretold, as we have related to us by an eye-witnes, one of the ablest and faithfulest historians that ever wrote, *Josephus the Jew.*

Now taking the argument thus intire, and beginning from the first principles, (without which one never argues justly) I believe it will be found that the argument from prophecies, will conclude against every one but

an avowed Atheist who ought not at all to meddle with this controversy.

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## C H A P. XX.

*Of the criteria, by which passages in the Old Testament are to be judged prophetical of the Messiah.*

IT seems plain that one main view of God's Providence in separating the posterity of *Abraham* from the rest of the world was to be the depositaries of the grand promise of the Messiah, who was to be an universal blessing to mankind; it might therefore well be expected that the descriptions of the Messiah should run thro' the *Jewish* revelation; that as they were at first separated with a regard to the Messiah to come from them, so their after continuance as a people thus in the peculiar favour of God, would have a plain respect to the same; that as this was the main thing which run thro' that revelation, and that which needed the firmest proofs, so the whole frame of miraculous dispensations towards that people, would be, one would reasonably think, adapted to support this main part of that revelation.

As they were separated, and continued a people with regard to the Messiah, the promise of the Messiah would be a support to them under all the calamities of their nation, and always assure them of thus much, that they should not be *utterly* destroyed; every miracle under that dispensation would heighten their notions of the power of God, and so remove the objections against the accomplishment of so incredible a thing as the setting up the Messiah's kingdom would appear; every miracle wrought in their favour, as it shewed them the peculiar regard of God towards them, would make any other instances of his favour (however great) when promised, the more credible; and as they were preserved a people and thus distinguished, because the Messiah was to come from them, so every lesser, intermediate deliverance must be in its own nature an earnest and pledge, of the great salvation of the Messiah. Every such deliverance, when an accomplishment of a prophecy, would be an additional security, as it shewed them the truth of the prophetick spirit, and imprinted on their minds a deep and lively notion of the faithfulness of God; 'tis no wonder therefore, considering all these things, that the great salvation of the Messiah is mixed with the lesser, intermediate deliverances of that nation, and since these bore so plain a relation to that, it is not in such cases to be

be judged as brought in abruptly; when there are the plain, distinguishing characters of this glorious kingdom, which sometimes are mentioned separately by themselves, intermixed with these lesser deliverances, to which they have so plain a relation, 'tis I think infinitely more rational to interpret these characters every where alike as being characters of the same kingdom, than to wrest and torture words in the strangest manner only to avoid the difficulty of a little seeming abruptness in the discourse.

I will just point at some places where the promise of intermediate deliverances and the great salvation of the Messiah are so intermixed together, that tho', in our present copies at least, there is no express mention of the former being given as signs of the latter, yet they may easily be understood to be mentioned at the same time, on account of the plain and visible relation they bare to it as earnests of its accomplishment.

Thus *If.* viii. after the threatening of the destruction to be brought on the *Israelites* by the king of *Affyria*, the Prophet mentions his over running the land of *Judah* also, but assures them he should not prevail to their destruction, because of Immanuel, *ver.* 10. who should be for a sanctuary, *ver.* 14. to his disciples, *ver.* 15. those children that God had given him, who trusted in the Lord as he did, *ver.* 17, 18. *Ver.* 21. he

resumes his former subject relating to their calamities from the king of *Affyria* to the end of the chapter; and in the beginning of the ixth chapter, gives pious persons some relief by the promise of the Messiah, whose presence, particularly in *Galilee*, which he there promises, ought to be some support peculiar to them, who were the first and chief in sufferings from the *Affyrian* king, chap. ix. 1—8. and then to be an earnest to them of this great and finishing deliverance; the Prophet in the next chapter mentions the breaking the *Affyrian* king's power, and the saving a remnant of *Israel*.

*If.* xi, xii. there is a noble prophecy of the Messiah's kingdom, and immediately afterwards in our copies, *viz.* chap. xiii, xiv. we have a promise of the destruction of the king of *Affyria*'s power; which prophecies if, according as they lie in our copies, they were given at the same time, may be considered as having that relation to each other, we have been speaking of. Chap. xi. we have a promise of their grand restoration by the Messiah, and intermix'd with it chap. xli. another of their deliverance by *Cyrus*. Chap. xlii. we have a promise of their grand restoration by the Messiah, and from thence to chap. xlvi. a promise of an intermediate deliverance by *Cyrus*.

*Jer.* xxix. 10—15. the Prophet promises the restoration of those of *Judah* that

that should be carried into *Babylon* after seventy years; as for the others, he threatens they should be dispersed into all parts of the earth, for their greater degree of wickedness, ver. 16, 17, 18. 19. com. xxiv. 8, 9, 10. *Deut.* xxviii. 31, 64. After this chap. xxx, xxxi. God promises, tho' he makes a full end of all the nations whither he had scattered his people; yet that he would not make a full end of them, but restore them and settle them in their own land, under the government of the Messiah for ever. Chap. xxxii. from ver. 36. to the end, there is a promise of a restoration to their own land from the *Babylonish* captivity; but in the following chapter, from ver. 14. they are put in mind of some greater deliverance, even of the fulfilment of God's principal promise to them, the promise made so long before to the Patriarchs, of the fulfilment of which all the lesser deliverances were but so many earnts and pledges, viz. the blessing of the Messiah's kingdom, under whom they were after all their troubles to be settled in their own land, so as never to remove from it more, and to be established a people ever in the favour of God.

*Joel* ii. after a lively description of the power of the *Affyrian* army coming up against them, and a promise of deliverance from it, the Prophet introduces the promise

of the great salvation of the Messiah, when God's Spirit should be poured on all flesh, &c.

*Mic.* iv. begin. there is a noble description of the Messiah's kingdom to be set up in the latter days, and the place of his birth is fixed, *viz.* *Bethlehem in Judah*; see ver. 1—9. After this the Prophet takes notice of the distress they were to be in from the king of *Babylon*, and comforts them with hopes of a deliverance; but this does not make him wholly lose sight of the great salvation of the Messiah which he intermixes with this chap. v. 2. as it was the main and chief blessing, and of which all the intermediate deliverances were so many earnest and pledges.

*Habak.* ii. after the Prophet's earnest complaint of the distressed circumstances of God's people, he has an answer sufficient to support them under all their troubles, *viz.* the promise of that great person they expected, who was to come as the deliverer, tho' at a great distance of time; in the mean time, as I apprehend, to assure them of the accomplishment of this, and so of the security of all their blessings to them, God promises to break the king of *Affyria's* power from whom their present troubles came.

*Zach.* ix. 10. there is a promise of the establishing of a peaceful, righteous, and universal kingdom, which are ever the prophetick

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phetick characters of the Messiah's kingdom; and after this the prophet goes on to intermix the mention of other lesser intermediate deliverances from ver. 11. to the end.

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## CHAP. XXI.

Of the great number of the prophecies of the Messiah to which Christ and the Apostles seem to refer.

1. **A**s it seems expedient God should make revelations, so that these should be suited to the exigencies of mankind, and so not unlikely, they would be various at various times, and to different persons.
2. That as God is the common parent of all, so that he would not confine this favour to one person, nation, family, &c.
3. Accordingly, in the *Mosaick* history, we have an account in the first ages of God's revelations to many good persons indiscriminately.
4. As *Abraham* was an extraordinary instance of righteousness, so it was fit he should have extraordinary favour shewn him, but yet so, as God should declare at the same time he would on proportionable degrees of virtue, bestow proportionable rewards.

wards. This therefore God in effect declares to him, and intimates that the choice he made of his posterity was for the common good of mankind, since from them should come one that was to be a common blessing to the world.

5. Afterwards when *Abraham's* posterity became the people of God, there were a number of prophets raised up among them: These prophets describe a kingdom with peculiar characters of extraordinary righteousness, peace, &c. set up by the miraculous Providence of God without human means, an universal and perpetual kingdom; a time is fixed for the first setting it up, *viz.* under the fourth or *Roman* monarchy, not long before the dissolution of the *Jewish* state; and also for the glorious completion of it, *viz.* at the decline of the fourth monarchy, in the latter days, after the last wide and long dispersion of the *Jews* into all parts, when they should be restored to their own land, so as not to remove from it more.

6. The truth of the prophetick spirit in the *Jewish* prophets supposed, it must plainly be the uniform design of Providence to direct mens minds to expect a kingdom described in the *same manner*, in the *same prophets*, in prophets of the *same age*, and of all the *several ages* of the *Jewish church*, while prophecy continued.

7. It

7. It is not unreasonable to suppose prophecies of this nature may be intermixed in other books, that are not only prophetical, as in the *Psalms*. Sometimes as in *Psal. cx.* we meet with exactly the same description of a kingdom as in the Prophets, and this as relating to another person than the Psalmist. Sometimes, as *Psa. ii.* we meet with the characters of this kingdom ascribed to one, of whom it does not certainly appear whether he be the Psalmist or no. Sometimes we have the same characters of a kingdom again, and the same person may be supposed thro'out the Psalm represented as King of this kingdom only by this one easy supposition which all languages, and especially the Eastern, do justify, *viz.* that the Psalmist personates this glorious King.

8. This will in a great measure account for the references of Christ and the Apostles to the Psalms in particular, as full of prophecies of the Messiah, if it be said that though there are many prophecies in those books of the Messiah, yet not of his first coming, as seems intimated. I answer,

(1.) It is not impossible that some of the prophecies referred to may now be lost, especially since they chiefly relate to these heads of prophecy, of which we still have remaining prophecies enough, though not so numerous.

(2.) Christ

(2.) Christ might well speak of the Law, Psalms and Prophets, as testifying of him, who was the end of the Law, just as love to God and man are spoken of as the main of the Law and Prophets. But of this more in the next Chapter.

(3.) The description of the Messiah's kingdom, which was then set up, was the main view of the Old Testament, and the two different states in which it was to appear do not make two kingdoms.

(4.) There was a remarkable agreement in several circumstances of these two states; both were to be ushered in by a forerunner; the Messiah's law was at both times to go from *Jerusalem* to the *Heathen* world; *Heathen* idolatry was to have a remarkable overthrow; there was to be a great spread of knowledge and purity in the world; both these states were to be set up by a miraculous interposition of divine Providence; the gifts of the Holy Ghost were to usher in both; &c. there was to be in both, a vast and sudden increase of subjects to this kingdom. On this account, though these two different states are sometimes plainly distinguished, as in *Daniel*, yet sometimes they are so intermixed that it is difficult to distinguish what relates to one from what refers to the other; and on this account, where the characters of these two states agree, some things which in the Old Testament were *directly* spoken of the last of them, are applied in the New Testament to the first.

C H A P.

## C H A P. XXII.

*Of the analogical reasonings in the  
New Testament.*

**I**T seems natural to suppose that there would be analogies and proportions observed in the works of one and the same wise Author. Sometimes there are particular wise ends to be answered by such analogies, as in the likeness of human faces, &c. but where no particular wise ends can be discovered, as in many resemblances between several parts of the vegetable and animal worlds, yet there may be this general one, viz. the pointing at one uniform cause of both. This is an argument that ought not indeed to be urged to an *Atheist*, who must first be shewn that there is a wise designing cause of all, before he can be brought to believe that this or that was his design; but to one that believes a design in the several parts of the work, such resemblances will suggest a very probable argument to confirm him in the belief of one uniform cause of the whole, and especially if these resemblances are many and very remarkable; and as he is sure from other arguments they must have a wise design, so he can discover no other end they

they answer but the pointing at one such uniform cause. When two institutions are proved to proceed from one and the same author, it is reasonable to expect some resemblance between them: As far as they are both to answer the same end, they must be alike; for a perfectly wise being can make no difference, where the reason of things is the same; if one institution be the completion and perfection of the other, there must be a parity between them, and with that in some instances a disparity also. As far as there is a parity between them, the same things that are truly affirmed of one will be of the other also; and therefore if the one be divine, so must the other, as far as it agrees with that, be also; the agreement therefore between them in a great variety of instances will afford a probable presumption to one that believes the divinity of the first, of the divinity of the latter; it will furnish with an argument sufficient to induce some credit to it, where there is no superior reason to the contrary.

When a person by other solid arguments is persuaded of the divinity of both institutions, the analogy between them will confirm him in the belief of one uniform designing cause, especially, if as in the former case the analogies are many and very remarkable, and seem adapted to answer no other end but the pointing at one such uniform

form designing cause. If several institutions are shewn to be divine, and there are resemblances between them in some very minute circumstances, as in the appointments of the seventh day, the seventh month, &c. for the first of which there was a moral reason, but perhaps for the latter no other but a conformity to the first; it will appear probable that those resemblances in such minute circumstances, were ordered with a view to point at one uniform designing cause; such a resemblance between two institutions will make the latter more easily understood, and readily received by those that have embraced the former; as far as they agree it will supply a strong proof of the Divinity of the latter; and if the latter be pretended to be a design to perfect and complete the former, the shewing how in the points wherein they differ, the latter does perfect the former, as the doctrine of the Gospel which reveals one sacrifice that being offered once for all, fully cleanses not only from ceremonial, but moral guilt, does that of the law, which only pretends by sacrifices repeated yearly, to cleanse from ceremonial uncleanness, and clear from political guilt (since for those crimes, which under the *Jewish* polity were to be punished with death, there was no sacrifice provided) is offering an argument very proper to confirm a person in the be-

lief that they both proceed from the same wise designing cause.

If it be proved to me from other arguments that both institutions proceed from one wise designing cause, the resemblances between them must be designed by this cause; and if they are fitted to attain certain good ends, if he be a perfectly wise being he must know their fitness to attain those ends, and design them in the giving these institutions those resemblances.

God appointed the *Jewish* expiations as well as the *Christian*, there is therefore an analogy between them; this the Apostle shews in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*; 'tis probable that the ordering that not a bone of the *Paschal Lamb* should be broken, was with a view to what should befall Christ, *Job.* xix. 36. who is called our passover by the Apostle *1 Cor.* v. 7. and that the particular directions concerning the *Paschal Lamb*, as that it was to be without blemish, &c. and the manner of celebrating the feast on it, viz. with unleavened bread, were ordered with a view to the use which it was designed should be made of it, when paralleled with the *Christian* sacrifice. See *1 Cor.* v. *1 Pet.* i. 19. See what Dr. *Clarke* has very well said on this subject in his connexion, &c.

The Messiah was to be the most perfect Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church; and therefore he is resembled to such as came

came nearest to perfection of these kinds in the *Jewish Church*. Thus he was like *Isaiah*, as in many other respects, so in the ill treatment he was to meet with from those to whom he delivered his message; and therefore *Isaiah* in his own name introduces the *Messiah* speaking in his prophecy. See *Is.* xl ix. 1—9.

He resembled in some respects the High-Priest among the *Jews* going in once a year with the blood of the sacrifices to make atonement for the people, to whom therefore the Apostle likens him. He was to resemble *Cyrus* the great deliverer of the *Jews* from the *Babylonish* captivity, in being a righteous, powerful, and victorious Prince, and under the peculiar care of Providence, and raised up for the deliverance of God's people by an extraordinary hand of God. There was to be a great resemblance between the *Babylonish* and *Roman* captivities, and the deliverances from the former by *Cyrus*, and the latter by Christ; and therefore the latter is represented under the image and figure of the former; and there is an easy transition from the one to the other.

*David* was a righteous, powerful, and in great part of his reign peaceful prince; he had his kingdom settled on him by promise, and was raised to it, after having passed thro' a great variety of troubles by peculiar Providence of God; he was the first

prince of the line of *Judah*, he reigned over the *whole* house of *Jacob*, and never had this kingdom taken from him, whereas it was threatened to his very next successor to have part of the kingdom broken off from him for his sins; under him the people were settled at home free from the power of their enemies and oppression of their prince, which last they were not even under his immediate successor; a proper image of the Messiah's righteous and peaceful reign over the *whole* house of *Jacob* united, and settled in their own land to remove no more; but this not till after his sufferings, according to the determinate counsel of God.

There were two promises made *David* concerning his house, the accomplishment of the one of which was an earnest and pledge of the other; the one relating to his immediate successors to sit on his throne for many generations; the other concerning a remote Son of his, *viz.* the Messiah, who was to reign over the house of *Jacob* for ever, in whose kingly power all the promises of God to *David* concerning the establishment of his kingdom were fully accomplished, as in his Priesthood even all the promises to *Levi*; and under whose reign the *whole* house of *Israel* were to have that peaceful settlement in their own land, of which *David's* own reign gave them some

faint image and imperfect resemblance, and from whom the kingdom was never to be taken, as it was not from *David*. This gives an easy account why the Messiah is called by the name of *David*, rather than any other of his predecessors, said to sit on the throne of his Father *David*, why such stress is laid on the promises to *David* of the building up his house, and how the good men under that dispensation came to build their hopes of all the blessings they were in expectation of so much on the fulfilment of that promise. 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 5. *Ps.* lxxxix. throughout. *Ps.* cxxxii. throughout. This gives an easy account of the quick transitions from the blessings of *David's* reign or his immediate successors, to the Messiah's kingdom. 2 *Sam.* vii. 9, 10, 11, 12. *Jer.* xxxiii. 15. to the end; and also why the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom are described as *David's*, *Is.* iv. 3. and lastly, of the resemblance in the expressions relating to the two different promises concerning *David's* family, the one of his immediate successors, the other of the Messiah, which has made some persons confound them. See *Jer.* xxxiii. 20. to the end, where God's fulfilling his covenant with *David* concerning a long race of princes to descend from him, and with *Levi* concerning the like succession of Priests in their line, seems to be made the earnest and

pledge of God's giving them that King, that is to reign over the house of *Jacob* for ever, v. 15, 16. who was also to be a Priest to perfect what was defective in the *Levitical* Priesthood. See what is very well observed on this head in the Essay on the several Dispensations, p. 39.

And now this resemblance between *David* and Christ, between the kingdom of the one and the other, will afford a very good argument *a pari*, from the one to the other. This will abundantly justify the drawing a parallel between them, the representing the one by figures taken from the other, the arguing from parallel circumstances of the life or reign of the one and the other.

Thus v. g. before *David* was possessed of a peaceful Kingdom he was to go thro' the severest sufferings. *David* in some of his Psalms represents the greatness of his afflictions, and particularly the ill usage he met with from his enemies; thus he does *Ps. lxix*. Amongst other instances of their ill treatment of him, he takes notice that they gave him gall for his meat, and in his thirst they gave him vinegar to drink; by which *David* perhaps designed to describe in a figurative way the worst treatment that could be, that instead of supplying him with what he needed for his refreshment, they gave him on such an occasion what was most distastful,

distantful, as if one should give an hungry man gall, or a thirsty man vinegar.

Concerning the Messiah there were express and direct prophecies that he should go thro' the severest suffering, particularly all ignominy, reproach, and ill treatment from his enemies; the particulars of these are not specified; but every instance of this kind was a distinct fulfilment of such general prophecies; as God for wise ends ordered that he should go through the severest sufferings (which were in *general* prophesied of) so he saw fit to have this particular instance of ill usage which *David* takes notice of concerning himself fulfilled in him; our Saviour therefore by saying I thirst, gave occasion to the fulfilment of this remarkable piece of ill usage on him, and so to the accomplishment of a wise design of God's *Providence* in making the Messiah the compleat-est instance of obedient suffering, and fully accomplishing those general prophecies which related to the contempt and ill usage he was to meet with from his enemies; and for this reason perhaps so much stress is laid on this circumstance by the Evangelist; *Jo.* xix. 28, 30.

*David* was a remarkable instance of preferring the glory of God and the publick good, to his own convenience and reputation, *Ps.* lxix. 9. and herein a faint resemblance of the Messiah, who to serve these great pur-

poses underwent all ignominy and reproach, and parted with every convenience of life, and thus was, as the Apostle observes, a perfect example to us, *Rom. xv. 3.* of condescension and publick spiritedness.

*David* was also a remarkable instance of trust in God, even in the greatest dangers; he believed that God would deliver him from his enemies that sought his life, and had very nearly executed their designs; and in confidence of this, he was not ashamed, to publish the salvation God would work for him, tho' he met with nothing but reproach for it; and he was herein a faint resemblance of the Messiah, who tho' he knew he was to be put to death by his enemies, yet continued his trust in God, and boldly declared the message God had given him to deliver to mankind, in hopes of a glorious resurrection; thus setting his disciples an example for them to follow; as accordingly the Apostles did boldly, preaching the Gospel, tho' they knew they were, as Christ was, to be put to death for it, in hopes of being conformed to his life as well as death.

Tho' *David* was appointed by God to be King, yet he was at first rejected by the great masters in *Israel*; but after they had in vain attempted the hindering God's great design, God brought him to the throne, and under him united the two houses of *Judah* and *Israel*, thus making him the corner-stone

that

that unites the whole building and supports its frame, *Ps. cxviii. 22.* And herein he was a faint resemblance of him, that after having been rejected by the great men of the *Jews*, shall erect a kingdom among believers every where, and thus unite under himself the intire building of God's Church, consisting of believers from among the *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, who are to supply the place of the unbelieving *Jews*, which were the main body of that nation. *Mat. xxi. 42, 43. Eph. ii. 20, 21, 22.*

*David* in certain places of his Psalms foretels the vengeance God would execute on his enemies, particularly that they should be cut off by the hand of God, and so their families be left destitute, and the places of honour or profit which they had descend to others; and now as God is equally a hater of such wickedness as *David's* enemies were guilty of wherever 'tis to be found, so the Apostles do very reasonably make God's vengeance on the Messiah's chief enemy, *Judas*, an accomplishment of such a prediction, just in the same manner, as promises made to good men in all ages, may be said to belong to us, as far as our circumstances agree with theirs; and to come yet nearer to the point in hand, threatenings against wicked men in former times, do concern us, as far as we are imitators of their crimes; and from hence the Apostles justly conclude, that

that as by the extraordinary hand of God *Judas* was cut off, so 'twas God's will this vacancy, made by his death, should be filled up. *Acts i. 16—22.*

The Messiah was to be the pattern of human excellency, perfection, and glory, through whom blessings were to be conveyed from God to the rest of mankind; whatever therefore is said of the perfection and glory of the human nature, must be true of him. See *Rom. v.* throughout. To him the Prophets ascribe victory over all his enemies, and an universal dominion, and this they make designed for the common advantage of mankind. See *Ps. cx.* And now from this observation we may see the force of the Apostle's reasoning, *Heb. ii. 5.* from the viith *Psalm.* He is proving that God has not put the world to come in subjection to Angels, but to man, according to the Psalmist's observation, that God has discovered great condescension in making man his instrument in destroying his grand enemy, the common enemy of God and man, and setting him over all his works, and thus one way or other putting all things in subjection to him. See *Ps. viii. v. 2, 3.* This indeed was done not all at once, but by degrees. God diminished man, or made him lower for a little while, than the Angels, then crowned him with glory and honour, and

and will at last put all in subjection to him.

The Apostle does not suppose the Psalmist not to describe God's condescension to *mankind in general*, which 'tis plain from the whole Psalm, and particularly ver. 3, 4, 7, 8. that he does; but he goes on this supposition, that whatever is said of the perfection and excellency of the human nature, must belong to the most excellent of the kind; he gives an interpretation of the Psalm that supposes the blessings described to come from the Messiah as the head of mankind, which makes all the parts of the Psalm admirably cohere together, and is justified by the event; he was made for a little while lower than the Angels, by taking mortal flesh, then as a reward of his sufferings crowned with glory and honour as a proper earnest and pledge, that in time all things shall be made subject to him.

*Corol.* 1. That these arguments from resemblances between two institutions, &c. are not to be urged to convince Deists, any more than parallel arguments from such resemblances in the natural world are to Atheists, but that their chief use is to confirm believers.

2. That the resemblances of the law to the Gospel, were not *prefigurations* of the Gospel; for before the resemblance could appear

the original must have been present as well as the picture.

3. That just as Christ's doctrine was the perfection of all religious institutions, and an argument *a pari* might be drawn from former institutions to that, and an argument to its advantage from the points of disparity; so Christ himself was the most perfect Prophet, Priest, and King, and therefore the blessings designed to be brought to the world by the message of other Prophets, the sacrifice of other Priests, and the government of other Kings, were fully bestowed by Christ; his doctrine perfected every divine institution; his sacrifice perfectly expiated sin; his government procures for his people complete deliverance from enemies, peace, and all sorts of happiness.

4. This gives a clear account of the strong expressions we meet with, that all the law and Prophets spake of Christ, *viz.* because he was the end of both, just as doing to others as we would they should do to us, is said to be the law and the Prophets. *Mat.* vii. 12. This shews how the whole law, a main part of which related to the distinctions of meats and drinks, is represented as a shadow, of which the body is Christ. *Col.* ii. 17.

5. This accounts for the expressions of the Apostle relating to the law, that it has the shadow of good things to come, of eternal

nal redemption, but not the very image of the things. *Heb.* x. 1. As the shadow does not represent the luminous body, but is quite the reverse of it; so in the frame of the law, there was no representation made of the blessings of the Gospel, but on the contrary as the Apostle shews chap. ix. 8—15. it was represented that those blessings could not be conferred by the law; but then as the shadow shews that there is a luminous body, for if there were no light there could be no shade, so the imperfect expiations of the law, which seem to discover God placable to sinners, and at the same time as not yet having provided a sufficient expiation for sin, lead to the expectation of some complete method of atonement to be appointed in time: See *Gal.* iii. 19—25.

(6.) This account perfectly reconciles the difference between those that are for, and those that are against Types. On the supposition here made, there are no configurations which the Anti-Typists are so much against, and on the other hand, here are all the resemblances supposed between the Law and the Gospel, resemblances designed by the wise Author of both to answer valuable ends, which the most rigid Typist can desire; and here is room

room left for all the best use that can be made of them by arguments *a pari*. All St. Paul's reasonings in the Epistle to the *Hebrews* concerning the Gospel, as the *truth*, the *substance* and *perfection* of the law, stand firm. By this hypothesis, and I imagine by no other, he is made throughout a consistent writer; for thus what he shews of the resemblance, in some particulars between the method of expiation under the Law and the Gospel, as *ch.* ix. 7, 11, 15, 23, 24. *ch.* x. 19, 20, 21. Of the Gospel's perfecting and completing the design of the Law, is made appear perfectly consistent with what he observes in other places, that the Law conferred a right only to temporal blessings; that it did not contain the image of good things to come; that the way into the Holiest of all was not opened under that dispensation; that the Sacrifices of the Law did not purge the conscience, but only cleansed from ceremonial and political guilt.

(7.) It will be easy to observe how this hypothesis, which fully accounts for the strongest expressions in the New Testament, concerning the resemblances between the Law and the Gospel, and the arguments deduced by the Apostle from that supposition,

tion, and which gives a vastly more agreeable account of the wise design of the Law in the appointment of many things which appear trifling, but as viewed with the relation they bear to the Gospel, than even the common hypothesis of types ; yet at the same time has this advantage, that it stands perfectly clear of the objections that are brought against the common hypothesis : To shew this, I will run over these objections, and offer an answer to them on this hypothesis.

*Obj.* 1.) If you allow of types at all, every thing will be typical, all nature will be full of types, and there will be no stopping any where. I answer, it is true, wherever there is an analogy between any parts of nature, it must be at last referred to the Author of nature, as part of his design in the frame of things ; and any argument from such analogies, as far as they reach, is conclusive ; but this does not come quite up to the notion of types, as we use the word in the present argument to denote a resemblance between two divine institutions as the Law and the Gospel, *designed* by the wise Author of both to answer several valuable ends ; as

(1.) The making the last institution more easily understood, by those that were before acquainted with the former.

(2.) Dis-

(2.) Disposing those that had embraced the former to the more ready reception of this, taking off thus from the last institution, the prejudice of novelty, and affording to them that were persuaded of the divinity of the former institution, an argument in favour of the latter, that would reasonably dispose them at the very first proposal to give some credit to it, where there appeared no argument against it stronger than this was for it.

(3.) Confirming believers, in the persuasion that both institutions came from one and the same perfectly wise being.

(4.) As the analogy is not perfect, shewing in the points of difference, the preeminence of the last institution, which as one would reasonably expect from that which is to be the last revelation of all, perfects and completes the design not only of the *Mosaick*, but all former revelations.

*Object.* 2.) If you don't interpret such words as shadows, &c. which represent the relation between the Law and the Gospel, to signify types, there is no proof of types at all; and if you do, the whole law will be typical, even as to those parts of it which bear no resemblance to the Gospel, as particularly where the distinction between meats and days is appointed; see Col. ii. 17. I answer, the whole law was a shadow of Christ, as it did, tho' not represent,

yet

yet in the way before explained *direct* men to Christ; and as the Gospel of Christ was the *truth, substance, and perfection* of all former revelations, so if you separate from any former institution, as particularly that of *Moses*, what was particularly fitted to the circumstances of that people for whose use chiefly it was given, or what was in itself *imperfect*, and so led naturally to the expectation of somewhat more perfect, what remains is the religion of Christ.

*Object.* 3. The Apostle in his Epistle to the *Hebrews*, is so far from making use of typical arguments, that his reasoning ever goes on this supposition, that there is a disparity between the Law and the Gospel;

*Ans.* 1. That disparity in some instances, supposes a parity in others. See *Heb.* ix. 8. to the end. chap. x. 1—23. 2. Sometimes the Apostle draw an argument, for the wisdom of God's latter appointments, from their analogy and resemblance to the former; thus *v. g.* as God's former covenant with his people was ratified by blood, so it was ordered that this last should be; and the former covenant, as *imperfect* in itself, and ratified by the blood of beasts, which could not fully expiate sin, appears now to be perfected as to the design of it, by the introduction of a *new covenant* established on better *promises*, ratified by the blood which fully expiates all sin whatsoever, and procures

cures eternal redemption, the Mediator of which ever lives to make intercession for us, and has full power to bestow the blessings of the covenant on those that are interested in them. See *Heb.* viii. 6. to the end. ix. 11. to the end. vii. 24, 25, 28.

*Object.* 4. The chief point wherein the Apostle shews the agreement between the Law and the Gospel is in the sacrifices of both; now as there is a great disparity as well as some resemblance between these, so if on account of the resemblance between them, the sacrifices of the law might be said to be typical of that of the Gospel, so they might also of prayer, repentance, &c. which bear some resemblance to them, and on that account are called sacrifices. I answer, according to the hypothesis above laid down, the sacrifices under the law did not prefigure Christ's sacrifice; they could not represent a sacrifice which should fully expiate sin, when they only cleansed from ceremonial or political guilt, but they agreed in the general notion of expiation, and in the manner of effecting it, viz. by blood, *Heb.* ix. 15--23. and Christ's sacrifice did compleat the design of all appointed expiations for sin, by wholly removing the guilt of sin, and procuring eternal redemption for us.

## C H A P. XXIII.

*Of the expressions then was fulfilled,  
and that it might be fulfilled.*

**I**T is objected by the Author of the *Literal Scheme*, that 'tis plain the New Testament writers suppose there are prophecies of the Messiah in the Old Testament, and that these were fulfilled in Jesus; when therefore they refer to passages of the Old Testament as fulfilled in Jesus, why should not we think they refer to them as prophetical of the Messiah, and if to some of them as such, why not to all? To this I answer,

(1.) Tho' there are very strong expressions in the New Testament concerning Christ, as prophesied of in *Moses*, the *Psalms*, and the *Prophets*; yet as 'tis certain the Messiah was *the end* of this Law and the *Prophets*, and it has been shewn by the writers on this subject, by an induction of particulars, that there are prophecies of him running thro' all these, and as these expressions might be used by men who intended no more than one or both of these senses, and as it does not appear they thought the whole Old Testament prophetical of the Messiah; so it

ought not to be supposed without proof  
that they refer to it as such.

(2.) The expression *then* was fulfilled, plainly signifies no more than, that then what such a writer speaks of was done; then his words were verified, or the like: and thus such words are usual in our own language continually. See *Jo.* xi. 48----53. But the expression, *that* it might be fulfilled, I think must imply something more. I own this does not always signify that a thing was done to this *end* that a prophecy might be fulfilled; but it must imply, that the thing was done to the verifying the words of such an author, so as that his words would not otherwise be true; as in a parallel case, when *David* says, *Against thee have I sinned, that thou mightest be justified, &c.* The meaning I think must be something more than that in *David's* sin God was justified, &c. viz. that *David's* sin was necessary in order to God's being justified in passing a sentence of condemnation on him. So in like manner when St. *John* says, chap. xii. 37, 38. *They believed not on him, that the saying of Esaias might be fulfilled, &c.* The meaning is, they did not believe to the verifying of *Esaias's* words, which would not otherwise have been true: But then this does not necessarily import a quotation of a real prophecy, but may be sometimes only a reference to a similar fact. v. g. If *Isaiah* describing

describing the wickedness of the men of his days should say, that God had, *viz.* by the methods of his Providence which they abused, blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, &c. St. John might apply this to the wicked Jews of his time, and say they could not believe, because *Isaiah* said this, *i. e.* because they were just such persons as *Isaiah* there describes, who would be equally deaf to God's calls in one age and another; we are then left still at a loss for a rule to know certainly when there is a *designed* reference to a *real* prophecy.

If the question were only, when a passage of the Old Testament is really prophetical, I should think Dr. *Sykes*'s solution to be very good, *viz.* that this is to be judged of from the context in the Prophet himself; but as this is a begging the question when we have to do with the Deists, I think we must fix on some other rule, and I would propose this, *viz.* that then a passage is to be judged a quotation of a prophecy, when a thing is referred to as a fulfilment of the words of the Prophet, and the passages in the Prophet appear to be *prophetical*, and to be fulfilled by this event; especially if they are of such a nature as never to have been fulfilled before by any *similar* event; and this will hold most strongly if it can be proved in any particular instance that they can be fulfilled in no other. *v. g.* The cha-

raetors of the Messiah, or of a certain glorious King, to arise in the latter days, referred to by the writers of the New Testament agree to Jesus, and (the time fixed being now elapsed) can, we are sure, agree to no other; therefore we are sure Jesus is the person denoted by these characters; and then that the New Testament writers designed to refer to these passages as prophetical of the Messiah, is plain, as is well observed by the Author of the *Literal Scheme*; because the New Testament ever refers us to *Moses*, the *Psalms*, and *Prophets*, as all speaking of Christ; bids us search the Old Testament, to see whether the things spoken of the Messiah therein, were fulfilled in Jesus or no.

When the New Testament writers refer to any passage of the Old, by using the words *then was fulfilled*, &c. upon supposition they are rational writers; 'tis most reasonable to suppose, that when the passages referred to are historical, they design only a reference to a *similar* fact. And where tho' they are prophetical, yet they are of such a nature as may refer to several events, they design to take notice of the event they mention, merely as of the same nature with that of which the Prophet speaks, except it can be shewn from the context that these writers appear to lay more stress on these quotations than this amounts to. This, I apprehend,

prehend, is a fair medium between the method of Dr. *Sykes*, and the Author of the *Literal Scheme*; on the one hand, I think it must be allowed that we are partial to the New Testament writers to suppose that then, and *then* only their citations are *intended* as citations of real prophecies, when we can shew *a priori* that the passages referred to are real prophecies; on the other hand, I think we don't treat these writers fairly, when we don't allow them the liberty ever granted to all rational writers, *viz.* not to suppose them guilty of absurdities without proof; *v. g.* not to suppose them to cite histories as prophecies, or general prophecies as particular ones, without evidence of this.

If this reasonable allowance were but made the New Testament writers, which the ingenious Author of the *Literal Scheme* will forgive us if we are as solicitous to claim for them, as he would be for his favourite *Cicero* on a like occasion, I am persuaded we need be in no pain concerning the event. It seems probable that St. *Matthew*, chap. ii. 15. refers to the prophecy Hos. xi. 1. of God's calling his Son out of *Egypt*, as a real prophecy of Christ, since he makes it ordered by the particular Providence of God, that *Mary* should go with Jesus into *Egypt* for that very purpose; see ver. 13, 14, 15. Let us see then whe-

ther we cannot find some evidences of a prophecy of Christ, *Hos.* xi. 1.

(1.) Then, *Israel* may be as well taken personally as nationally; 'tis understood in the former sense, chap. xii. 3, 4, 12. and the discourse is, in that chapter, in like manner intermixt with the two *Israels*, personal and national, as here, and to the same purpose also to shew the ingratitude of *Israel* in despising God's Goodness shewn their ancestors, and thus shewn them also. Now the greatest instance of God's goodness to *Israel*, personally considered, was his chusing him, when a child, before *Esaū*; and this also was the foundation of all God's peculiar and distinguishing mercies to his posterity, particularly of their being chosen for the people of God in such a manner as the rest of the world were not.

(2.) It will then be most natural to interpret the latter clause concerning God's Son, personally; the question then is, who is meant by God's Son? Now,

1.) 'Tis not necessary God's Son should be *Israel* before mentioned.

2.) 'Tis not probable that it is,

1. Because this title is never given him in so appropriating a manner: Nor,

2. Is there any mention in *Jacob's* history of any call of his out of *Ægypt*.

3. But the Messiah was in a peculiar and eminent sense God's Son, and was

known by this title from the prophecies; 2 Sam. vii. 14. Ps. ii. 7, 11. lxxxix. 26, 27. whence in the time when our Saviour appeared Son of God and King of *Israel*, or Messiah, were synonymous terms.

4. Tho' there were perhaps no other prophecies of the call of the Messiah out of *Egypt* but this; yet those to whom the Prophet speaks might easily understand, that the calling him out of an *Heathen* country into *Canaan*, was a signal blessing to *Israel*, and might easily be led to interpret this as an evidence of his being *peculiarly* sent to them, which was the sense of a vast number of prophecies.

5. The ingratitude then of the *Israelites* was seen in their despising God's goodness, who *had* thus chosen them for his peculiar people, as they knew both from what he had done, and promised to do.

I will close the discourse on this prophecy, with only this observation, *viz.* that the distinguishing love of God to *Jacob*, when a child, and therefore when he had done no good, as his brother, and who was the elder, and so stood fairest for the blessing, which yet he lost, had done no evil, was the fullest discovery of God's choice of that particular people to whom the prophet addresses to the national blessings of a temporal covenant, a much fuller one than the distinction God put between *Isaac* and *Ishmael*,

mael, which was in some measure founded in their different deserts. *Gen.* xv. 6, 7. xvii. 20, 21. xxi. 9, 10, 12. com. with *Rom.* iv. 13. ix. 7, 8, 10, 11. *Gal.* iv. 28—34. and the difference of their parents, the one a bondwoman, the other a free, *Gen.* xxi. 10. *Gal.* iv. 22, 23. Whereas here *Rebecca* conceived by *one*, even our Father *Isaac*, and yet the preference was given to the *younger*, even before any difference could appear in the characters of the two brothers, *Rom.* ix. 10—14. Thus the blessings of a *national* covenant were bestowed on the *Israelites*, by the distinguishing favour of God; and so in like manner were the spiritual blessings of the Messiah's kingdom first offered them thro' distinguishing goodness; for tho' he was born in the land of *Israel*, yet it might have been the design of Providence that he should exercise his prophetick office when grown up, in another country; and when thro' the cruelty of *Herod* his parents were forced to fly that country, and were directed by a particular Providence into *Ægypt*, it looked as if God, for the sins of his people, was resolved to deny them this great blessing, if at the same time that he directed his parents to fly thither, he had not limited a time for their residence there, and at the end of that, called his Son out of *Ægypt*. See *Mat.* ii. 13, 14, 15, 19, 20.

See

See the literal accomplishment of two prophecies cited by St. Matthew.

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## CHAP. XXIV.

*A review of some remarkable Prophecies of the Messiah in the Old Testament.*

I Shall begin with the first promise relating to the Seed of the woman, which was to bruise the serpent's head ; before we can understand which, we must have a right notion of *Moses's* history of the fall. *Moses* is (like *Cæsar*, *Xenophon*, &c.) a very plain and simple Historian ; now such Historians are wont, to *relate facts* only and *describe appearances*, not to enter into the *reasons* of things. Thus his account of the creation is (as Mr. *Whiston* has demonstratively shewn) such an account of the formation of things, as a spectator of all the several changes in the Chaos, from which our Earth arose, who troubled not his head with philosophical speculations, would give, though at the same time *Moses* does not obscurely intimate, *Gen. i. 2.* that the *real* formation out of a Chaos, which he describes

Scribes in the following verses is, only of our earth.

*Moses's* account of the creation then is not a *philosophical*, but a *popular* account, and that only of the *visible* creation; and therefore there is no account of the formation of the Angels.

Now these things being laid down, it will be a very easy matter to give a clear account of the history of the fall: Consider *Moses* as an historian, according to the character before given of him, and he is to describe only appearances. Now in the temptation of *Eve*, it is certain only the literal serpent was visibly concerned. *Moses* therefore must mention no other; he could take notice of no spiritual invisible agent as concerned, because he had given an account of none such in the history of the creation. Or if it should be thought, that notwithstanding that, he might, as in some other parts of his history, mention the agency of invisible beings, yet certainly without a previous account of the fall of some of the Angels, and their consequent punishment, he would not introduce such an invisible agent, as bringing evil first into our world, for fear of countenancing the ancient error of two independent principles. See Dr. *Sherlock's* Sermons of the use of Prophecy.

Accord-

\* T  
Devil a

Accordingly, he begins with the account of the subtilty of the serpent, above all beasts of the field, and makes that the ground-work of his whole story. All the transaction, from the beginning to the end, is ascribed to this serpent. And thus must the curse refer to him also.

This now is the account *Moses* gives of this matter, as an Historian. All this while he does not deny the agency of any superior invisible Being, a *true relation of appearances* is not contrary to Philosophy, which gives an account of the *reason* of those appearances : He that talk's of the sun's rising and setting, &c. gives a good account, as an Historian ; and the Philosophers account of the diurnal motion of the earth is not contrary to this. *Moses* as an historian gives an account of the *relative* formation of all parts of the visible creation ; but this perfectly coincides with the true philosophical account, of the *gradual, real* formation of *our earth out of a Chaos*. Thus here, *Moses* gives an account of the serpent's visible agency in the temptation, which is not at all inconsistent with the invisible agency of a superior Spirit, to whom the New Testament seems to ascribe it; \* nay, to whom *Moses* gives one a fair

\* Thus our Saviour referring plainly to this History calls the Devil a liar and murderer from the beginning, *John viii. 44.* thus,

fair occasion for ascribing it, by giving no account in his history of other parts of the brute creation being in a considerably higher

Thus, *Rev.* xii. 7, 9. there is represented a War in Heaven between *Michael* the chief of the good Angels, and the Devil the head of the evil Angels, who is called the old serpent in allusion to this History. See also, ch. xx. 2.

Thus the Apostle to the *Hebrews*, ch. ii. 14, 15. represents Christ as taking flesh (and thus becoming the Seed of the woman) that through death he might destroy or disannul the designs of him that had the power of death, i. e. the Devil, of him that by his temptation prevailed to the bringing death on mankind; which is an exact explication of the original promise, *viz.* that the Seed of the woman, or mankind, should bruise the head, or destroy the power of the serpent, or of that superior Spirit, who goes under that name as assuming his shape, as some of the Angels are called, *Isa.* vi. Seraphim or fiery flying serpents probably on the same account; Christ who was one of the Seed of the woman, defeating the designs of the serpent, who, as he introduced into the world, would have fixed death on mankind, exactly accomplished the prophecy, that mankind should at length prevail over the serpent.

But the clearest passage in the whole New Testament to this purpose, and which will lead us into the true account of this whole matter is, 2 *Cor.* xi. where the Apostle is warning them against those corruptions of the Gospel, which the Jewish false Apostle would have introduced, and he warns them of their danger from the wiles of this false Apostle, by the fall of *Eve* thro' the subtlety of the serpent, who by cunning craftiness brought *Eve* to listen to his false and corrupt account of God's revelation to her, v. 3. as the false Apostle would his additions to the Gospel of Christ, v. 13, 14, 15. He compares these false Apostles to the messengers of Satan, as the true Apostles he calls messengers of Christ, the false Apostles transformed themselves into true Apostles, or put on the air and character of such, particularly endeavouring to imitate them in miraculous works; just as Satan transformed himself into an Angel of Light, when he appeared v. 3. in the form of a Serpent, like such a divine messenger, and thus deceived *Eve*, who might probably easily have understood the difference between the evidence of a divine message brought by an Angel of Light appearing with the Shechinah, and is the pretended one of an Angel of darkness, appearing though in the shape of that creature, whose form was assumed

higher degree of reason before than after the fall, of any alteration in that respect of the brutal (as he gives an account of an

assumed by the Angels of light, yet without the Shechinah, just as the false Apostles, though they might perform some wonderful works, yet wanted the power of conferring the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which was a distinguishing character of a true Apostle.

This seems to me the true account of this matter, *Moses* relates only appearances, therefore he mentions nothing but a serpent; but as good Angels were wont to appear as attendants of the Shechinah in the form of fiery flying serpents; see Isa. vi. and as this was probably a thing well known to those for whose use *Moses* writ; since he seems to refer familiarly to the two sorts of Angels, Cherubim and Seraphim, the appearance of the latter of which seems to have been that of fiery flying serpents; see Gen. iii. 24. Com. *Psal.* civ. 4. xviii. 8, 9, 10. he very properly calls this superior agent by the name of that creature whose form he assumed; and as those for whose use he writ had (as appears all along in their history) a notion of superior Spirits, which were concerned in introducing either good or evil among men, when *Moses* relates such things of a beast called the serpent, as could not literally belong to it, they would easily attribute those things to that superior Spirit, who they knew was wont to assume his shape.

I will only add, that St. *Paul* as well as *Moses* takes particular notice of the subtilty of the serpent, or of the beast so called, and this seems of more consequence in the story than we commonly imagine. It is probable the Devil chose this beast because of his known subtilty, and that in his actions he gave many proofs of it on this occasion; there is nothing represented in the history as spoken to the woman concerning the pleasantness of the food, its agreeableness and wholsomeness, which yet is taken notice of as a thing *Eve* was some way or other well assured of; probably therefore by the brisk and lively motions of this animal after eating the food; she also speaks of it as a thing she was well assured of, that the food of this tree tended to improve the powers of the mind; this also she might be led to think from those uncommon instances of craft and subtilty, which the serpent gave after eating the food, from which she might conclude, that if the fruit of that tree had (as she apprehended it had) such a virtue as to exalt the faculties of that animal almost above the brutal, it might improve hers to the

an alteration of the vegetable part of the creation) by the fall, particularly of any alteration in that respect befalling the serpent, which

the degree was pretended, *viz.* so as that she should be no longer in that low rank of beings, as that she should need continually to be told what was good and what was evil for her; but that like the superior Spirits, who by visible forms she knew frequently appeared to her, she should know always what was good and evil for her, and thus have the means of attaining happiness, and avoiding misery always in her own power; and as this appeared very probably to be the natural effect of this fruit, she was easily led to conclude that a perfectly good being could not *absolutely* and *perpetually* forbid it her, though he might for a time, as a trial of her dependance on him for the means of happiness, &c.

The ingenious Author of the *Literal Scheme* understands this whole story of the literal serpent; but against this hypothesis it may be objected,

(1.) That *Moses* can never preserve that character of a wise and sober writer, which he has always deservedly had, if he be supposed to introduce a beast of the field talking as rationally as a man, without giving an account in his history of the creation of any change since made in the brute creation.

(2.) It is hard to account for it, how the notion of evil Spirits should be so ancient, if it were not grounded on this history of the fall.

(3.) The curse upon the serpent, who is represented in the history as the chief offender, is according to this Author's interpretation no more a curse on the serpent than it is on man. It is pretended indeed, by this ingenious and learned Gentleman, that the curse cannot be understood in our way, because that even though it were granted that a victory was intended of man over the serpent; yet it does not follow, he should recover what he had lost by his enemy, *viz.* eternal life. I answer, this Author does not seem to have considered that those who interpret the curse on the serpent, as belonging to the Devil, interpret it figuratively, and by breaking the serpent's head, understand destroying the power of that enemy of theirs, who had introduced death in the world, to which mankind were now subjected; and, without a remedy provided, to lay under it for ever; and then, the most natural sense of the curse on the serpent will imply the breaking the Serpent's or Devil's killing power, *i. e.* his power of *continuing*, as he had brought in, death in-

which one would think a much properer curse on him than the mere alteration of the form of his body ; but notwithstanding this, as *Moses* had introduced this superior invisible being as concerned in no part of the transaction, he could not with any propriety introduce him as concerned in the curse. If it be said that the introducing the whole story by the mention of the subtlety of the literal serpent, is contrary to the supposed *rationale* of the history. I answer, not at all ; since, just as a mere spectator of the whole transaction, that did not enquire into the reasons of things would think the reason of the serpent's being particularly concerned, was his extraordinary subtlety above other beasts ; so an enquirer after the reasons of things, would resolve his being chosen as the instrument by the superior invisible being into his extraordinary subtlety.

Thus much for *Moses*'s account of the fall, considering him only in the character of an historian ; let us next consider him in the character of a Lawgiver and Prophet ; and considered in this character, his design seems to be, to give the *Israelites* a clear notion how, tho' God be perfectly holy and good, yet

to the world, and so the deliverance of mankind from their subjection to death, by a restoration to an immortal life ; *sin* was brought in by the *temptation of the serpent* ; *sin brought in death*. The promise then of the destruction of the serpent's killing power, which was by *sin*, implies a promise of a restoration to life by righteousness.

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evil

evil moral and natural, have entered into the world, and on this theory of natural and moral evil, to graft an useful moral instruction. First as to the theory itself: From *Moses's* account, the plain original of moral evil is this; God made at first, and continues still to make man upright, *i. e.* indeed with certain appetites and passions, which under the government of reason, given for that end, lead to what is right and good, for private and publick happiness: moral evil is the consent to do what is contrary to reason thro' the prevalence of the passions; external circumstances may present us with occasions of such evil, but 'tis our consent that makes the crime; our passions and appetites lead to such actions as are agreeable to them, there is nothing irregular as yet; but when we pursue these things, without consulting reason, or in opposition to its dictates, we deny our selves to be what we are, *i. e.* beings indued with reason as moderator of the passions. *Eve* was forbidden a certain fruit that was hurtful to her; however it was agreeable to the eye, and seemed pleasant to the taste; she therefore had naturally an appetite to it; it was also represented as having a tendency to increase knowledge: This increase of knowledge she also naturally desired, there was nothing amiss as yet, but here lies her crime, that these appetites hindered that free use

use of her reason, which would have led her to keep close to that command, that plain command she had received from God ; and thus as sin first entered, so it has since been continued in the world, exactly according to the account of St. *James*, chap. i. 13, 14, 15.

Natural evil proceeds from moral. The consequences of the first sin, and so of others afterwards, are represented to be in the mind shame, suspicion, fear, particularly a slavish dread of the divine Being; in the body, diseases tending to death; and this also is exactly the account of St. *James* in the place just mentioned, and of St. *Paul*, *Rom.* v. 12. where he makes death to enter by sin, and to pass on all, for that all have sinned. The moral instructions to be learnt are, that God is perfectly holy, notwithstanding there is so much wickedness in the world, that moral evil is nothing but our consent to what is contrary to reason, *i. e.* our denying our selves to be, what God has made us, rational creatures; that God is perfectly good, tho' there be so much misery in the world, which is only the necessary consequence of moral evil; that moral evil arises from appetite prevailing against reason; and that therefore we should keep the strictest guard on our appetites.

*Corol.* 1. What an amazing hypothesis is Dr. *Sherlock's*, who builds the whole scheme

of religion on this promise; thus he lays his scheme; There can be no religion without hope of being delivered from the evils sin brings on us, and restored to the blessings sin has forfeited; natural reason gives not these hopes, there needs an express promise, and this was the first express promise; therefore this is the foundation of all religion. But I would desire to know whether all nations of the earth were not obliged to be religious as well as the seed of *Abraham*, whether they could be religious without hope? whether they could hope in a promise, without any knowledge of the promise? whether the Doctor does in good earnest think there was a clear tradition of this promise to all nations under heaven? whether this promise could be conveyed clear and uninterrupted as to all nations, so to all ages of the world? whether the contrary be not plain fact, *viz.* that the intire *Heathen* world were ignorant of this promise, as the Doctor understands it, *i. e.* as a promise of a resurrection to life? whether they were not wholly ignorant of death's being the punishment of sin; and by consequence of life's being the reward of righteousness? whether therefore they could have an assurance of full forgiveness, *i. e.* of the removing intirely that punishment which sin had brought into the world by the restoration to a completely happy and immortal life, or blessed state of existence,

existence, with an indissoluble union of soul and body? whether notwithstanding they had not sufficient encouragement to virtue from the natural happy consequences of virtue, especially considering these as taking place, not only in the present, but a future state of existence, which the joint consideration of God's nature and their own would lead them to expect? lastly, whether otherwise God can possibly be the moral Governor and Judge of the *whole* world?

*Corol.* 2. From this account of the creation and the fall, we may see, how the notion of eternal life was preserved in the first ages of the world. Death was originally the punishment of sin, eternal life of consequence the reward of righteousness; death entred by sin, and rests on all, because all are sinners; but from the beginning God promised that the seed of the woman should bruize the serpent's head, *i. e.* that mankind should prevail over him that had brought death into the world. Afterwards God promised for *Abraham's* faith to bless him in so eminent a manner; that he should be a pattern as of faith, so of the blessedness belonging to it, to all nations; that he would accept his faith for righteousness, *i. e.* on account of his faith deal with him as tho' he were righteous; that he would be his God, *i. e.* give him the reward belonging to a child of his, bestow on him the reward of

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righteousness, *viz.* eternal life, which since he was to die as other men, must imply his resurrection to this eternal life; and as God is not a partial being, but in blessing faithful *Abraham*, blessed all the faithful; this was a promise to all the faithful of a resurrection to eternal life, as our Saviour argues with the Sadducees, *Mat. xxii. 31----33.*

(3.) We may learn the rise of some doctrines, and see the reason of a great deal of the language of the New Testament; thus we see how death is the wages of sin, and life the reward of righteousness; how death is continued on all for sin, and life re-enters only thro' Jesus the righteous; how *Adam* and Christ are represented as the two heads of the human race; by one of whom sin and death, by the other righteousness and life enter into the world; how our sin and misery, our righteousness and life are set out in such strong figures by our conformity to these two, as by putting off the old man, putting on the new; the want of apprehending aright the history of the fall has made these things difficult to us, which seem to have been plain to those that lived in that age, and therefore are by the Apostle familiarly spoken of as things well known.

(4.) We may see the reason why this promise is not particularly mentioned in the New Testament; because, tho' it was fulfilled exactly by Christ, yet it is not a direct prophecy

prophecy of him, and it is of a very general nature; the Apostle therefore in his account of the dealings of God with fallen men, very properly begins with the promise to *Abraham* of a blessing *to faith*.

(5.) From the account given above, I think we are supplied with a solution of the difficulties mentioned by the ingenious Author of the *Literal Scheme*, &c. According to this account *Moses* is supposed to be a plain and simple historian; he enters into no philosophical account of things, and yet drops such hints, as that from comparing them with the whole frame of his history, one may be led to see the true causes of those appearances which he gives an account of. Here is supposed no *direct* prophecy of *Jesus Christ*, and yet an account of that entire victory of mankind over the being that has here the name of the serpent, as was procured for them by him, and by none else; he was the first that was raised from the dead, so as not to return to see corruption, *Pf.* xvi. 10, 11. he made his soul an offering for the sins of God's people, and by the knowledge of himself he justifies, or procures life, the reward of righteousness, for many, *i. e.* the whole world, as well *Gentiles* as *Jews*, *Is.* liii. 11, 12. This *Jesus* pretended to do, and that he has done it, he has shewn by his resurrection, which was the sign he gave for that purpose, and

by the gifts of the Holy Ghost which are marks of his royalty, and discoveries of that full power he has at God's right hand, of bestowing all suitable blessings on his people, and particularly of giving eternal life to as many as God has given into his hands, as towardly, well disposed persons to be trained up for it. This was the first discovery of the design of the recovery of a lost world; the next is what God was pleased to afford to *Abraham.*

When God called *Abraham* to go out of his country, he promised to bless him in so extraordinary a manner, that in him all nations of the earth should be blessed; *i. e.* that as he was a pattern and exemplar of faith to the world, so he should be of its reward; insomuch that not only his posterity, but even all nations of the earth, when they wished for the utmost happiness for themselves, should desire to be happy as *Abraham* was, or to be blessed with his reward. This is the meaning of the phrase to bless in, or by a person in all other places where 'tis used. Thus when *Jacob* blessed the two sons of *Joseph*, he blessed them, saying, *In thee shall Israel bless,* saying, *God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh.* Thus when the prosperous reign of the Messiah is set forth, *Pals.* lxxii. 2, 17. it is said, that his name shall endure for ever, and (so prosperous shall he be that) *men shall*

*shall be blessed in him, all nations shall call him blessed.* Thus *Jer.* iv. 1, 2. God promises to *Israel*, that if they would return, he would return to them, and they should never be removed; and so happy should they be, that the nations should bless themselves in them, and glory in their relation to them. See *Gat. in loc.*

*If.* lxv. the Prophet after having distinguished between the righteous and wicked among the *Jews*, determines their different fates, ver. 15. *Ye shall leave their names for a curse unto my chosen, for the Lord God shall slay thee, and call his servants by another name;* and then it follows ver. 16. *That he who blesseth* (either himself or any other) *in the earth, or in the land, should bless in the God of truth;* or as it should be rendered of the true, or firm, stable and well established people, *and he that sweareth in the land shall swear by the God of the well established people* (who will by the new name he gives them ver. 15. again acknowledge his relation to them) *because the former troubles* (in their unsettled state, when they were not such a stable people) *are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes.* God then promises *Abraham*, that he should be an extraordinary instance of blessedness, which could not refer to any temporal blessings in *Canaan* where he was a sojourner all his days; besides he was blessed for his faith; now the reward of faith

faith from the great Governor of the world could not be only of temporal blessings; this faith was *Gen. xv.* accounted to him for righteousness; and thus he was intituled to eternal life, the reward of righteousness. Now as all nations of the earth were to bless themselves in him, they must come to the knowledge of his faith, and the reward of it, and the promise (which as God is not a partial being must be made to *all the faithful*) which must belong to all such persons in every nation. Afterwards chap. xxii. God promises that all nations should bless themselves in *Abraham's seed*: Now this in like manner imports, that one or more of his seed should be a remarkable instance of the same blessedness; and this was exactly fulfilled in Jesus who was of *Abraham's seed*, who by perfect righteousness had a title to eternal life himself, first entered on it himself, and has promised to bestow it.

*Gen. xl ix.* we have an account of *Jacob's* calling his twelve sons together, appointing them as the heads of their several families, that were to grow up into so many tribes, that should divide the land of *Canaan* among them, and parcelling out to each of them their distinct blessings: Here it is plain the blessing of *Abraham* that descended to *Jacob*, through *Isaac*, falls to the lot of *Judah*, who is to have the sovereignty and dominion; because the great lawgiver or judge

was to come from him. Ver. 10. *The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver or judge from between his feet,* i. e. their polity and government within themselves, now settled, should not be wholly taken from them, 'till he come whose it is, i. e. whose the kingdom is, or for whom it is reserved, as the *Syriac, Chaldee, and seventy* translators plainly read, very little differing from our present *Hebrew* copies, and to him be the gathering (or obedience) of the people, or nations, *θνων* as the Seventy have it, by which they frequently understand the *Heathens* in contradistinction to *λαος ιερανηλ* God's peculiar people: The meaning is, that *Judah* should remain a distinct tribe, with the proper government of such a tribe, after the other tribes should have lost their government, 'till he should come, for whom the government was reserved, and with a regard to whom they were thus long preserved a distinct tribe, with the proper powers of such, lost in other tribes; and 'till he should gather a people to himself from among the *Gentiles*, whom he would have no longer strangers to the commonwealth of *Israel*, but fellow-citizens with the Saints, the believing *Jews*, and of the household of God.

The next prophecy I shall take notice of shall be Deut. xviii. 15, 20. *The Lord thy God shall raise thee up a Prophet from the midst*

midst of thee, of thy brethren like unto me, unto him ye shall hearken ; according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb, — The Lord said unto me, they have well spoken that which they have spoken ; I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall come to pass, that whoever will not hearken to my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.

Now,

(1.) From hence it is plain, that the original occasion of the delivery of this Prophecy, was the *Israelites* desire, that for the future, when God delivered his will to them, he would not do it *immediately*, with the pomp and terror he then did ; accordingly God appoints *Moses* to deliver his messages for the future to them, and promises in after times a Prophet like to *Moses* : now this naturally leads one to suppose that this Prophet was one single person, and to resemble *Moses* in his peculiar character by which he was distinguished from common Prophets, *viz.* of a *Lawgiver*.

(2.) It is indeed brought in again on occasion of the danger of the *Israelites* going after the *Heathen* divinities, and this purpose also it served very well, interpreted of a single person ; for it was very un-

coming them whom God had taken such care effectually to instruct in his will to run after such persons.

(3.) There were some characters which are taken notice of as distinguishing *Moses* from the other Prophets; on which account it is said there was none like to *Moses*, viz. for the greatness and number of miracles, and the clearness and directness of his revelations, not by dreams and visions, but immediately by a voice from the Shechinah.

(4.) What determines this matter, is the context following, as was observed to me by a very ingenious friend; the Prophet he here speaks of, it is supposed *absolutely* should, like *Moses*, speak what God had given him to speak, and therefore they are commanded *absolutely* to submit to him as to *Moses* on pain of destruction.

But when he comes from ver. 20. to the end, to speak of the common Prophets to arise in the church, he supposes some of them would speak in the name of other gods, and some in the name of the true God the things which did not come to pass; and both these they are to reject, and only to receive him who spake in the name of the true God, the things which were verified by the event.

Now let us see how all this agreed to Jesus.

(1.) He was a Lawgiver as well as *Moses*.

(2.) His

2.) His revelations were the most clear and plain that were ever given.

3.) He pretended to immediate revelations, and discovered by the whole tenor of his actions, that he was no impostor, as well as by all his discourses that he was no Enthusiast; and therefore, as he himself well argues, *John* viii. 14. ought to have been believed, when he said he came from God, upon his own testimony, much more when this was strengthened by the many wonderful works, which he shewed from the Father.

4.) He wrought such miracles as no man else had wrought.

5.) The neglect of hearing him was revenged on the whole nation in such a manner, that even their own historian owns the hand of God to have been seen in their destruction; and as *Limborech* well argues in his conference with the Jew, it is very strange, they should have been now for so many ages under such signal marks of God's displeasure, if there were not some national sin for which they smarted as formerly for idolatry; and that can be nothing else but the murder of this great prophet God had sent to them, which therefore the penitent Jewish Church will humbly confess and acknowledge in the latter days. See *Psal.* li. 14. *Zech.* xii. 10. This, I think, is a full vindication of the Apostles in the

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New Testament, supposing them to refer to this as a *particular direct prophecy* of the Messiah ; but if we should suppose it to be only a *general and indirect one*, it will be sufficient to save their authority, as interpreters of the Old Testament.

If we should grant our adversaries that this was not a Prophecy that referred *particularly* to any *one single Prophet* to arise in the Jewish Church, but that it agreed to all true Prophets in that church ; it was fulfilled then in every true Prophet that arose, but most *eminently* in those that were the most *eminent* of the sort, that most *exactly* agreed to the characters here laid down, particularly likeness to *Moses*, &c. If Christ then were a *true Prophet*, like *Moses*, &c. the Prophecy was *fulfilled* in him ; and if he were the most *eminent* of all the true Prophets in that church, it was most *eminently* fulfilled in him.

There are other *general Prophecies* of a like nature, that will serve to explain this matter ; it is prophesied that Christ should suffer for us, to obtain our salvation ; every suffering then that he underwent to that end was a distinct fulfilment of these Prophecies ; and they were very properly taken particular notice of, as fulfilled on any *eminent* sufferings of Christ for us, as his death, &c. Thus there were *general prophecies* concerning the Messiah's last sufferings, all the

the *particulars* of them are not mentioned, but in the *particular* instances of his sufferings, it is observed the *general Prophecies* concerning his sufferings were fulfilled, *Mat.* xxvi. 54, 56. *Acts* iii. 18. xiii. 29.

The second Psalm seems plainly prophetical of the Messiah. The Psalmist brings in the Messiah, reproving the nations and the people for opposing his reign, which was the result of a divine decree which he recites; and then invites the rulers of the earth to fall in with the divine counsels in submitting to the King which God had set over them. Now that this Psalm does not refer to *David* himself seems to me plain from the following considerations.

(1.) Because the character of being set or anointed King upon or over God's holy hill of *Sion* does not at all suit *David*; *David* was not anointed King in *Sion*, but at *Hebron*; and after this anointing, *David* and all *Israel* went to *Jerusalem* which is *Jebus*, where the *Jebusites* were the inhabitants of the land. *David* took the castle of *Sion*, which was from that time forward called the city of *David*, see *1 Chron.* xi. 1,—7. But now this is ever described as the character of the Messiah and his kingdom. Thus God is to send the rod of the strength of him who is *David's Lord*, and to sit at God's right hand out

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of *Sion*, Psal. cx. 2. Thus in the *last days*, when the *Jews* are to be in so prosperous a state that all nations shall be proselyted to the worship of the God of *Israel*, and when universal peace is to be settled in the earth, out of *Sion* shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from *Jerusalem*, Isa. ii. 2,—5. Thus, when God shall put his Spirit into the *Israelites*, so as never again to take it from them, the Redeemer is to come to *Sion*, and to them that turn from transgressions in *Jacob*, *Isaiah* lix. 20, 21.

(2.) A person is here described that is the Son of God, by way of *eminence* and *distinction* from all others. Now as the phrase, Son of God, signifies one who is like the great Governour of the world in dominion and authority; so he who is denominated by way of *eminence* the Son of God, must be one who bears the nearest resemblance to him in dominion and authority, as suppose in moral excellencies fitting him for dominion, and in the extent and duration of it. Now there certainly have been kings that in some at least of these characters have far exceeded *David*; but now the Messiah, or the Son of *David*, to be raised up to sit on his throne in the latter days, is to sit on it for ever, 2 Sam. vii. 13. because he has discovered such exact righteousness in his government,

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therefore God promises to exalt him above all powers whatever ; he is to have a *universal* and *perpetual* dominion, which no power, either *celestial* or *terrestrial*, besides him received, *Psal.* xlv. 6, 7. See also, *Psal.* lxxxix. 19,—37.

(3.) He is said to have the Heathen or nations of the earth by that character in Scripture, usually distinguished from the people of the Jews, given him for his inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth, (*i. e.* plainly of that earth which those nations inhabited, whose kings set themselves against him, ver. 2.) for his possession.

The eighteenth Psalm seems to have some of the characters of the Messiah, that run through the Old Testament, and therefore I apprehend should be ascribed to him ; thus, the person spoken of is described as the head of the Heathen, as well as of the people, God's peculiar people the Jews, ver. 43. Com. *Psal.* ii. 1. God's King, by way of eminence, ver. 50. Com. *Psal.* ii. 6. and *Psal.* lxxxix. 18, 20. having a seed even among the Gentiles (among whom therefore he would give thanks) that should reap the blessings of his kingdom, v. 43. 49, 50. Com. *Psal.* lxxxix. 29. xxii. 31. *Isa.* viii. 16, 18. lxx. 10, 11, 12. liv. 3, 4, 5. him i. David could not give thanks among the nations over whom he was made head, or on su invite them to joye with him in celebrati

ting God's praises for the deliverances given him, which were so many defeats of *them*. In all the other places where we meet with this expression of giving thanks among the Heathen, it refers to the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, in which these nations were to share in common with God's people *Israel*, as we shall see from some other of the Psalms relating to the Messiah to be hereafter taken notice of.

*David* seems to have had a revelation made him concerning his seed the Messiah's exaltation to his kingdom after his resurrection; and being made the head both of Jews and Gentiles. This he knew purely by the revelation of the Spirit to him, but now having from this revelation of the Spirit to him the image livelily impressed on his mind of a mighty and victorious Prince, raised and made prosperous through the peculiar favour of God towards him, he represents him in a poetical manner, as surrounded by numerous and powerful enemies, as going forth victoriously against them, in the name of the Lord. See the like figures used on the same occasion, *Psal.* ii. cx. cxviii. xlvi. and lxxii. He sets out God's power as engaged for him in the most pompous manner, so as it is wont to be represented in scripture on such occasions; he sets out God as engaged in the combat with the Messiah's

enemies in manner becoming the dignity of a God, using arms offensive and defensive, suitable to the *Lord of the hosts of heaven and earth*; i. e. making the several parts of the creation, subserve the interests of his Messiah, especially lightning, hail, &c. which admirably suits the idea of Jehovah, as *King of heaven*.

After these victories obtained over all his enemies, the Messiah's kingdom is represented as *fully established* in the world, his *universal kingdom over the people*, i. e. God's peculiar people the *Jews*, who should now submit to his government without the least contention or dispute, and *the heathen* (that is, the nations of the earth in former times not distinguished by peculiar marks of God's favour as the *Israelites* were) who should now in common with the *Israelites*, rejoice in the blessings bestowed on the Messiah's seed, of which they make a considerable part, ver. 43. to the end.

The xxth and xxist Psalms seem to be prophetical of the Messiah.

In the first of these, he who is *the King* by way of eminence, i. e. the Messiah or *Anointed of the Lord*, who is to be strengthened out of *Sion*, ver. 2, 6. Com. with *Psal. cx. 2.* is described.

In the second of them, the same person is described as having length of days *for ever and ever*, ver. 4. Com. with *Psal. cii.*

24. to the end, lxxii. 17. as being made most blessed for ever, or as one whom God hath set to be blessings, made an eminent instance of blessedness for ever, ver. 6. Com. Gen. xxii. 18. *Psal.* lxxii. 17.

The Psalmist had it revealed to him that the Messiah was to come from his loyns, and reign over the house of *Jacob for ever*; having this notice, he naturally represents the Messiah as a Prince in a peculiar manner set over *God's people Israel*; he describes them therefore as a loyal people concerned for the welfare of their prince, putting up prayers for the success of his government, in the first of these two Psalms; having received an answer to these prayers they are represented in the last of them, as joyning in thanksgiving for the mercies bestowed on them through the Prince. As the Messiah was peculiarly the *King of the Jews*, and as we have the people of *Israel* in the xxth Psalm, represented as putting up their prayers to God for him, as *their Prince*: So nothing can be more natural than for them, ver. 3. to express the piety of this Prince (which they very reasonably use as a plea in his behalf with God) in language borrowed from their law; especially considering that as these observances were strictly enjoyned in the *Psalmist's* time, he would naturally take his image of a worshipper of the true God from thence: Com. *Ps.* xxii. 25.

The xlviith Psalm seems prophatical of the Messiah's kingdom.

All nations are by the Psalmist called on to rejoice, when upon the restoration of the *Jews* to their own land (after the destruction of the enemies that stood in their way, ver. 3, 4.) God should appear as King not only over the narrow tract of *Judea*, but over *all the earth*, ver. 2,--7. as King of the *nations* (that are commonly distinguished from the people of *Israel*) ver. 8. when the voluntaries of those *several people* of the earth, that is, those of them that liked God's government, should be gathered or joyned to the people of the God of *Abraham*, i. e. to the *Israelites*, ver. 9. Com. *Psal.* cii. 15, 22. *Psal.* xviii. 43.

The lth Psalm seems to represent God's solemn transactions towards the Jewish people in the latter days, when he shall separate the righteous from the wicked among them, utterly destroy the latter, but establish the former for ever, under Messiah their King, Com. *Isa.* lxv. 66. *Mal.* iii. 1,—5.

The lviith Psalm seems to be a prayer fitted to the Jewish church in the latter days, wherein after the heavy complaints of the miseries endured in her captivity, she expresses her desire of that time when God's glory should be over or upon, not the narrow tract of *Judea* only, but *all the earth*, or this whole lower world, as ap-

pears from its standing in opposition to the heavens, ver. 5, 11. and promises to celebrate God's praises among the nations, ver. 9. Com. *Psal.* xcvi. 9, 10.

The lxviiith Psalm is not at all suited to any circumstances of *David's* life as recorded in his history, in whose time God did not cast off and break his People, and drive them from the possession of the inheritance of their several Tribes, as is here intimated; it should therefore rather seem to be the prayer of the Jewish Church in the latter days, upon God's restoring them from their captivity, and their taking possession of their own land again, and dividing it among the several tribes.

The lxixth Psalm seems to be the prayer of the people of *Israel*, in the latter days, when driven for their sins to the utmost ends of the earth, ver. 2. Com. *Deut.* xxviii. 64. xxx. 4. expressing their hopes of being restored again to their own land, and receiving again the inheritance of God's true worshippers, under the government of the Messiah, who is to reign over them for ever, ver. 5, 6, 7.

The lxiii Psalm seems to be the prayer of the people of *Israel* in their last grand captivity, for a restoration to their own land, ver. 1, 2. that they might there again, in God's Temple, see the marks of his presence among them as formerly, ver. 2.

**Com.** *Ezek.* xxxvii. 6. Declaring the confidence of their King the Messiah in God, and the success God would give his government, by blessing all that were true to their allegiance to him, but blasting all that were perfidious to him, *ver.* 11. **Com.** *Jer.* iv. 2. *Psal.* ii. 12.

The 18th Verse of the lxviiiith Psalm, is referred by the Apostle, *Eph.* iv. 8. to Christ's ascension into heaven, and pouring out the gifts of the Spirit; now to strengthen this interpretation it may be observed,

(1.) That God is invisible, but he is represented as appearing by a visible symbol of his presence in the cloud of glory; the Angels are represented as his Ministers, his retinue, attendants on his glory; but there is one eminent person described as conducting this glory, who therefore appeared in *the glory of God*, and *was King and Head of that people whom God had chosen for his own inheritance*. And this was probably the Messiah; see and **Com.** *Exod.* xxiii. 20, —— 23. *Exod.* xxxiii. 2, 14, 15, 16. *Deut.* xxxii. 8, 9. Sec. 70. *interp.* *Psal.* xlvi. 6, 7.

**N. B.** Against this notion it is objected, by the ingenious Dr. *Morgan*, in his excellent *Preface to his Collection of Discourses*,

(1.) That the Apostle to the *Hebrews*, by shewing the excellency of the Gospel above the Law, from this topick, *viz.* that the Law

Law was delivered by Angels, but the Gospel by the Son of God, supposes the Son of God did not deliver the Law.

*Ans.* The Apostle is shewing the excellency of the Gospel, above the Law, from the difference between the *ministers*, by whom the one and the other were delivered; God is the *original Author* of both; Christ delivered the Law but appearing in the *form of God*, by the *ministry* of Angels. Afterwards he himself condescended to empty himself of the form of God, and assume the form of a servant, and therein to propose in the name of God his Father, the terms of the Gospel to the world; after this, he indeed reassumes this form of God, and orders this Gospel to be published to the *whole world* as his Law, after his ascension and the descent of the Holy Ghost.

(2.) That the Apostle to the *Hebrews*, in his exhortation to hospitality, takes notice of *Abraham's* and *Lot's* entertaining Angels, unawares, but not a word of the Son of God, the mention of whom on this occasion, would have very much strengthened his argument.

I answer, It is certain, that God often signified his will of old by Angels; these appeared sometimes as attendants on the Shechinah, which I suppose conducted by the Son of God, thus appearing in the form of God, in the glory of the Father.

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'At other times, as to *Abraham* and *Lot*, they appeared in the form of men, without the Shechinah.

2. This glorious person, I suppose, delivered the *Law from Sinai*, to the *Israelites*, and at his ascension into heaven, bestowed the gifts of the Spirit on the Apostles to enable them to publish his new *Law from Jerusalem*, to the whole world.

3. At Christ's ascension, were gifts really bestowed on God's people (which there were not at the giving the Law) such gifts of the Spirit as were marks of royalty and discoveries of that universal power and dominion which he had received.

4. Then he led the angelical host captive, subjecting them to his dominion ; see Mr *Pierce's* dissertation on *Eph.* iv. 8.

5. The gifts of the Spirit then bestowed were given, as is intimated, *ver. 18.* not only to those that had been before in *God's kingdom*, but to the rebellious also, the sinners of the *Gentiles*, among whom God now dwells, they being his *habitation through the Spirit*, *Com. Eph. ii. 22.*

Psalm lxxxth seems to be the prayer of the ten tribes, as Psalm lxxixth of the two tribes, during their last grand captivity, complaining of their miseries and imploring God's mercy for their restoration, which they expect by the hands of the Messiah, that eminent person whom God had indu-  
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ed with power on purpose to work out salvation for his people; ver. 17. Com. *Psal.* lxxxix. 19, 20, 21.

In Psalm lxxxvi. there is a Prophecy of all nations worshipping God, which is one character of the Messiah's kingdom to be set up in the latter days.

The lxxxixth Psalm is a large explication of the promise of God to *David*, 2 *Sam.* vii. 14, to establish the throne of a Son of his, *viz.* the Messiah for ever.

All the parts of the Psalm very well agree to this supposition; the Messiah was to sit on the throne of *David* for ever, and therefore by him was *David's* throne to be established; now when God seemed to have cast off the family of *David*, then this promise relating to the Messiah, seemed to be vacated; what is said of *David*, ver. 27. cannot be understood of *David* literally.

(1.) Because these high things of a perpetual and universal dominion, could no more be attributed to *David*, because they were characters belonging to the Messiah, his Seed, then to *Abraham*, &c.

(2.) Because the words of the Psalmist, from ver. 19. are only a large explication of the promise, 2 *Sam.* vii. where every thing of this nature is ascribed not to *David* himself, but his seed, ver. 12,—15.

(3.) Because the seed of *David* to be established for ever, is explained in the Psalm itself

itself to be the children of that person, whose throne is thus to be established, i. e. of the Messiah, ver. 29, 30. com. 2 Sam. vii. 14. the disciples of the Messiah; *If.* viii. 16, 18. xxxiii. 10, 11. *Pf.* xviii. 50. cii. 28.

In *Pf.* xciii. there is a prophecy of the establishment of God's *universal* kingdom, and the happy settlement of the world in consequence of it.

In *Pf.* xcvi. there is a prophecy of God's reigning, so as to establish the world, and judge the people righteously. The same prophecy is continued in the xcviith *Psalms*, wherein the Angels are called on to worship the King whose glories are thus described; from whence the Apostle, *Heb.* i. very well argues the superiority of the Messiah, who is the *immediate* King of this kingdom above the Angels, who by being required to worship the Father, the fountain of all power, must be required to worship him, by whom he executes it. See and compare *Rom.* xiv. 10, 11, 12. with *If.* xlv. 23.

*Pf.* cii. from ver. 1. to the middle of ver. 24. seems the prayer of the Messiah to God his Father, complaining heavily of the troubles he endured, which would shortly make an end of his days, from ver. 1. to 12. however supporting himself with this consideration, that God endured for ever, and

and that he was always the same, and therefore that he would in the fulness of time accomplish all his promises to his people, concerning their restoration and establishment, when upon the restoration of *Israel* the *Heathen* also should fear the name of the Lord, ver. 12—23. But upon renewing his complaint of the cutting short of his days, and praying for the lengthening of them, God is represented from thence to the end of the Psalm, as declaring the perpetuity of his life and kingdom. Ver. 24. About the middle you have the beginning of the Father's answer, *Thy years are throughout all generations*; ver. 25. *Thou at first settledst all governments whether celestial or terrestrial, and thy kingdom shall last when they shall be all destroyed.* See Mr. Pierce's Commentary on *Heb.* i. 10. *There shall never want a race of men to be faithful servants unto thee.* ver. 28. compare *Is.* lxxiiii. 10.

If you interpret the Psalm in this way, every part of it coheres, and answers with the utmost exactness; but there will be a considerable difficulty in interpreting the whole Psalm as a prayer of the Psalmist: He begins with a complaint of his troubles, which were like to shorten his days, but supports himself with the consideration of God's eternity and immutability, which enabled him to fulfil his promises to his people in

in distant ages, after the Psalmist should be laid in his grave. At ver. 23. he renews his complaint again of the shortness of his days, which would prevent his seeing the salvation of God. Now it would be no support to him under this trouble to think of God's eternity and immutability, which gave him no encouragement to hope for longer life, except God had promised it. I imagine therefore that the Psalmist in the beginning of the Psalm is complaining of his own troubles, and supporting himself with the promises God had made the Church in the latter days; but ver. 23, 24. on renewing his complaint of the shortness of his days, he had strongly impressed on his mind an answer to his prayer, which reaches from the middle of ver. 24. to the end, which answer not at all, suiting his own circumstances, he knew he was directed to personate that great King whom God had promised to set on his throne in the latter days. And perhaps from the Psalmist the tradition of it was conveyed in the Jewish Church to Christ's time; from whence the Apostle to the *Hebr.* chap. i. argues from some parts of this Psalm, as easily allowed him by his adversaries to belong to the Messiah. And thus as the Psalmist was more fully instructed in the nature of the Messiah's kingdom, so he was supported under his trouble by the promise of the Messiah, which was

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the sum and completion of all God's blessings to his people.

The Apostle to the *Hebr.* chap. i. 10. supposes the words he quotes to be the words of the Father to the Son, for he is from *ver.* 4. reciting the names, titles, and honours God the Father in the Old Testament has ascribed to the Messiah, above what he has done to the Angels, as his Son by way of eminence, *ver.* 5. the object of the Angels worship *ver.* 6. who has a throne above all his fellow powers, whether in heaven or earth, *ver.* 8, 9. and lastly, who is to have a *perpetual* kingdom, when all other governments, whether in heaven or earth, shall cease, which he proves by two quotations; the first from *Ps.* cii. which reaches from *ver.* 10. to 12. and the last from *Ps.* cx. which reaches to the end of the chapter. Now here I would observe in support of the Apostle's application of the words of the Psalm under present consideration,

(1.) That he supposes the Psalm interlocutory, as we have before shewn it probable that it was.

(2.) That the applying what is here said of the eternity of the Messiah to the perpetuity of his kingdom, very well suits the whole design of the Psalm, compare *ver.* 12, 13, 14, 27, 28.

(3.) That then, the interpreting the laying the foundations of the earth, and framing the heavens,

heavens, of settling the governments in heaven and earth, will best suit the purport of his discourse.

*Ps. cviii.* is the prayer of the Jewish Church in the time of their last grand restoration for the discovery of God's glory over *all* the earth, upon which they promise to praise him among *all* nations.

*Ps. cx.* is one of the plainest prophecies of the Messiah in the whole Old Testament; and as a great part of it relates to the first state of the Messiah's kingdom, it has in great measure been very exactly fulfilled; for which reason I shall make some remarks upon it.

(1.) Then I observe, that in applying this Psalm to the Messiah, we have two advantages, that the Psalm does not run in the name of the Psalmist himself, but plainly belongs to another person, and to one single person throughout.

(2.) The person spoken of was *David's* Lord; now as *David* was an absolute prince, he had no lord on earth, he must then be understood of some *heavenly* King.

(3.) This *heavenly* King was to sit at the right hand of God, *i. e.* to be next in dignity and power to him, according to the language of the eastern nations.

(4.) His kingdom was to be set up at *Jerusalem*, ver. 2. his rod or scepter of power was to be sent out of *Sion*; thus when

when Christ appeared to his disciples after his resurrection, he commanded them that they should tarry at Jerusalem till they were indued with power from on high. *Luke xxiv. 49.* He promised them, that they should receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon them, *Acts i. 8.* This promise was exactly fulfilled by the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of *Pentecost*, on the Apostles and the hundred and twenty brethren, *Acts ii.* which was, as St. Peter argues, an evidence of Christ's being exalted to the right hand of God, *ver. 33.*

These gifts of the Holy Ghost bore witness to Christ's mission, were discoveries of his universal and uncontrouled dominion, prepared the way for the spreading his doctrine where it was not known, and the establishing and settling his religion in the world, and the producing the happy fruits of it amongst those who had embraced it. Some of these gifts discovered a great and wonderful power, and that exerted in a way not agreeable to the common methods of God's Providence; and this as well for the preservation of Christ's friends (by healing their diseases, &c.) as the destruction of his enemies by inflicting diseases, and these sometimes mortal ones. These therefore might very properly be called the scepter of Christ's power.

(5.) He was to rule in the midst of his enemies, ver. 2. The best comment on these words you have *Acts* iv. where after that Peter and John had been examined and threatened by the Chief Priests and Elders, they return and relate all that had passed to their company, who when they heard it, lift up their voice to God with one accord, and said, *Lord thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth, &c.* who by thy servant David hast said, why do the Heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things; the kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers took counsel together against the Lord, and against his Messiah: for of a truth against thy holy Child Jesus whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate were gathered together: and now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant to thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy Child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the word of God with boldness. And with great power gave the Apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, ver. 23---34.

(6.) In this day of Christ's power, his people were to be a people of free-will offerings, *Ps. cx. 3.* Thus *Acts* iv. 32. The multitude

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multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul, neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. As many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the Apostles feet, and distribution was made to every man according as he had need.

(7.) The converts made to Christ in the day of his power were to be very numerous, like the drops of the morning dew, *Ps. cx. 3.* Thus no less than three thousand were converted by Peter's sermon, which first opened the kingdom of heaven to the Jews at Jerusalem, on the very day the Holy Ghost descended, *Acts ii. 41.*

(8.) He was to be a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedeck, *Ps. cx. 4.* Being exalted to God's right hand, he has full power of bestowing blessings on God's people, and is to be the great medium, through which they are to receive and to expect them from God.

There is no mention of any sacrifice offered by Melchisedeck, but only that he interceded for Abraham, and bestowed royal favours on him.

Thus the Messiah, after having by his death completed all the designs of the Levitical sacrifices, see *Ps. xl.* and *Is. liii.* is to

sit down at God's right hand, and be a Priest for ever, not like the *Levitical* Priests, to offer sacrifice continually, but like *Melchisedec*, to bestow blessings on God's people. When the Psalmist says, that the Messiah is to be a Priest after the order of *Melchisedec*, or like *Melchisedec*, he does not, I apprehend, mean, that there was to be an order of Priests, of which *Melchisedec* was the first, and the Messiah the second; for such a Priest as he here describes, there never was, excepting the Messiah, who alone is a Priest for ever, and is to sit down on God's right hand till all his enemies are made his footstool. If *Melchisedec* were only a common man, in whom, according to the custom of the early ages, the priestly and kingly power were united, I can hardly think Christ's Priesthood would be compared with it, especially when it is probable such a person at other times offered sacrifices like other Priests, particularly the *Levitical* Priests, and therefore Christ's Priesthood was no more like his, than theirs. *Melchisedec King of Salem*, or the righteous and peaceable King, who met *Abraham* and blessed him, seems to be no other thanr the Messiah himself; and there is no difficulty in supposing the Psalmist to compare the Messiah's *universal* Priesthood received after his resurrection, with his *particular* Priesthood, exercised to *Abraham* and his seed, which were God's family before the incarnation.

nation of Christ; compare *Ps.* xlv. 6, 7. Now let us see the exact fulfilment of this part also of the prophecy in the exalted Jesus: Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he poured forth his illuminating and miraculous Gifts, by which the Church was furnished with sufficient knowledge of the *Doctrine* of the Gospel, of their *duty* and the *motives* to it, and the *evidences* of his religion, by which *all the members* were fitted for the several wise and great purposes, God designed they should serve, and were all (particularly *Jews* and *Gentiles*) *united* together by one *Spirit* to one *head*, by which they were mark'd out for *God's people*, and declared heirs of an *eternal inheritance*, except they forfeited it by an unholy life; and thus they were animated to go through all the difficulties in the way of their duty, even the most cruel persecutions for the sake of Christ; and now we that live in distant ages, have transmitted to us that doctrine with which the Church was then *illuminated*, and that *evidence* by which they were assured of the divinity of Christ's doctrine, particularly of the great article of *eternal* life, the strongest motive to an holy life, even when attended with the greatest difficulties; and thus Christ, as our great High-Priest, has blessed his Church in all ages, with all needful blessings, and through him we are to expect every spi-

ritual mercy from God: And thus the words of the Psalmist are exactly fulfilled, *viz.* that the Messiah is appointed to be a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec. The rest of the Psalm seems to relate to the latter state of Christ's Kingdom, and therefore I shall drop the consideration of it, only adding this one observation, *viz.* that the very exact accomplishment of what relates to the former part of the Messiah's kingdom in Jesus, in so many minute circumstances, and those some of them such as discover a miraculous power engaged on his side, are very fit earneſts, pledges, and assurances of the accomplishment of the rest, relating to the latter state of his kingdom.

The nature of the cxviiith Psalm seems to me to be this.

The Psalmist had it revealed to him that the Messiah was to come from his loins, that in the latter days he was to be Prince over God's people *Israel*, and to gather all nations into his kingdom, after having been at first rejected by his own people, especially the chief of them; that he was to restore, secure, and defend God's people, and destroy their enemies: This being the revelation made him, the Psalmist seems left to himself to set it out by what figures seemed best to him; his images then he naturally takes from the state of a prince (like himself) at first greatly oppressed, having many

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and powerful enemies, in great distress for a while, from their attacks, but finally victorious.

He describes next the sense such a person might be supposed to have of the happy alteration of his circumstances, and the sense his loyal subjects might be supposed to have of it, who are naturally enough represented as rejoicing in a very solemn manner in their private houses, and in the publick congregation. He represents in a very beautiful manner this victorious Prince calling on all the several orders of the people, the priests, and the proselytes to join with him in praising God. He represents him making his solemn entrance into the publick place of worship with his company, the keepers as opening the doors, him celebrating God's praises at his entrance, and then those within, particularly the Priests waiting at God's altar, answering and joining with the King and his company, blessing God for settling him after all the contempt he had met with in the *kingdom*, the *intire* frame of which (like the corner stone of a building) he now supported and upheld, ver. 22.

Next he describes the King as praying God to continue his mercy begun, and to prosper his reign: Then the Priests are represented blessing first the Prince by God's appointment set over them, and next the people his attendants; then the people ~~all~~ join

join in giving thanks for the deliverance, and calling for a sacrifice of praise to be offered; lastly, the whole is concluded with the King's declaration of his deep sense of the mercy, and his solemn invitations of all to join with him in thanksgiving for it.

*Corol. 1.* We see whence it came to pass, that at our Saviour's entrance into *Jerusalem* a little before his death, the common people of the *Jews* that were inclined to take him for their King, express their regards to him in the words of this Psalm, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord;* which seems to shew the sense of the *Jewish Church* at that time, as understanding this Psalm of the *Messiah.* *Mat. xxi. 9.*

*2.* We see the force of our Saviour's argument, *Mat. xxi. 42---44.* *Did ye never read in the Scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner?* i. e. the *Messiah*, who was despised by the unbelieving *Jews*, is made the chief stone in the building of God's Church, that like a corner stone, is to unite the whole building composed of believing *Jews* and believing *Gentiles* received in the room of the unbelieving *Jews*; *Therefore, say I to you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you* (unbelieving *Jews*) *and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.*

In like manner St. Peter speaks, *Acts iv.* 11. *This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner,* to unite the whole frame of God's Church throughout the world, as it follows, ver. 12. *Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.*

So also St. Paul, alluding as I imagine to this place of Scripture, says, that believing *Gentiles* are built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, supporting and uniting the whole building of the Church, or the collection of believers, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*.

In *Ps. cxxv.* there is a prophecy of *Zion's* establishment *for ever*, and of the settling peace on *Israel*.

*Ps. cxxvi.* is the triumph of the *Jewish* Church on their restoration, probably their last grand one, which should be so very remarkable as to be observed by all the nations whither they had been led captive.

*Ps. cxxix.* is *Israel's* reflection, probably on their final restoration, on the many afflictions they had gone through even from the infancy of their state, from which they were now happily delivered by God's appearance on their behalf, and becoming an enemy to all their enemies.

*Ps.*

*Ps. cxxxviii.* seems to be the thanksgiving of the Messiah for the establishment of his kingdom in the latter days, when all *kings of the earth shall praise the Lord, upon hearing the words of his mouth. When they shall sing in or rather, of the ways of the Lord: because great is the glory of the Lord.*

*Is. vii.* upon *Rezin* king of *Syria's*, and *Pekah* king of *Israel's*, joining against *Judah*, and the fears of *Judah*, and particularly of the house of *David*; *Isaiah* is ordered to go to *Ahaz*, with his son *Shearjashub*, and to assure him that the designs of his enemies should not take effect. At this same time probably, *Isaiah* is commissioned to offer *Ahaz* any sign that he should chuse, to assure him of the truth of God's promise, *viz.* that they should not be utterly destroyed; but on his refusing any sign, God himself gives the house of *David* a sign, *viz.* that a virgin should conceive and bear a Son, which would discover God's extraordinary power in his birth, and so mark him out as an eminent instrument of his providence, which was farther declared by the name given the child, *viz.* *God with us*, to signify God's peculiar favour discovered to his people in the giving him; and to shew, that tho' this Child should be born in so extraordinary a manner, yet he should have a true body of flesh and blood as we have, it is intimated that he should eat the common food of children in those countries, *ver. 14,*

15. God speaks here to the house of *David*; now that may as well be understood of the house of *David* in the latter days as at that time. If this event had been fixt to the then present time, it must have been understood of the men of that age; but that it is not so to be understood seems plain from its not being thus fixt; and then it may as well be understood of the house of *David* in the latter days; and 'tis more than probable the Prophet gives the sign to the house of *David* in the latter days, because the present generation were unworthy of such a sign, and *Ahaz* had just before refused any sign at all. When this sign happens, then they are assured they shall not be destroyed, but have all the blessings promised confirmed to them.

God puts the house of *David* in mind of the great promises made to them, and particularly mentions the birth of that glorious person of their family, which would be a security to them of all their blessings.  
 Ver. 16. the Prophet pointing to *Shearjashub*, whom he was ordered to take with him probably on the delivery of this second message (if indeed it be a distinct message) as well as the former, since it was of the same nature, says, that before that child there before him, *For, or rather surely, or yea before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and chuse the good, the land that thou abhorrest*

*horrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.*  
Now that this is to be understood of *Shear-jashub*, and not of a child not yet born, seems plain,

(1.) From the general, I believe I may say constant use of the word here translated child, for a child of some age, and not newly born. See *Trommius's Concordance* under the words *παιδίον* and *παιδαρίον*.

(2.) Because the deliverance here spoken of must happen within two years; whereas from the birth of a child to its knowledge of good and evil, or coming to years of discretion was never reckoned less than ten or twelve years.

(3.) Because the same event is afterwards, *viz.* in the viith chapter fixed to another child of the Prophet not then born, coming to speak plain, *i. e.* about a year and half's time, which will answer very well to *Shear-jashub's* coming to know good and evil, who was now big enough to go with the Prophet to *Ahaz*, but not at all to a child then unborn, coming to years of discretion. See Mr. *Whiston's Supplement, &c.*

The accomplishment of this latter prophecy, directed particularly to *Ahaz*, would be a very proper earnest and pledge of the accomplishment of the former, which secured much greater blessings to the house of *David*; and of these blessings, that accomplishment was a very proper sign; it was a

miraculous event (according to the use of the word sign in the context) and a proper security to the house of *David*, they should not be utterly destroyed, since he was come who was to reign over the house of *Jacob* for ever, and to bless the house of *David* particularly; see *Zach.* xii. 8, 10. The security to them of these blessings, was the coming of the Messiah their Saviour, of whom there is one particular character specified here, that is not mentioned elsewhere, *viz.* being born of a virgin; but this not as a sure sign of *it self*, by which they should know God was about to do for them the great things he had promised them, *for the whole* security offered them is the birth of the Messiah; of him is described, chap. ix. in the promise to *Judah*, as the wonderful revealer of the great counsels of God, a mighty God, the Father of the future age, the Prince of peace that is to sit on the throne of his father *David* for ever. Now of this glorious person, there were other characters given besides what is here mentioned; and therefore the accomplishment of *this alone* could not secure to the house of *David* all the blessings they expected from him; but as there were wise reasons for the Messiah's being born of a virgin, so God might see fit to declare this beforehand, not that this miraculous conception might be (which it was not in its own nature fitted

fitted to be) a publick sign or mark by which the Messiah shold be known, and so men be secured of the blessings of his kingdom, but the more fully to declare God's peculiar and extraordinary interposition in that great affair; and when any person should appear in whom no one known character of the Messiah besides was wanting, it is reasonable to be presumed that he had this also, when this is claimed for him by his disciples, and their pretensions never fairly disproved.

*Is. viii. 5—10.* the people are threatened with the coming of the king of *Affyria*, who should intirely over-run the land of *Israel*, and make great inroads on *Judah*, the land of *Immanuel*; against *Judah*, neither these nor any other powers should at this or any other time prevail to its utter destruction, because it was the land of *Immanuel*, or because *Immanuel* protected it; and he shall be for a sanctuary ver. 14. of sure defence, viz. to all true believers; but for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to both the houses of *Israel*, or to two of the houses of *Israel*, viz. *Judah* and *Benjamin*, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of *Jerusalem* (their metropolis) and many among them shall stumble and fall, and be broken, and be snared, and be taken.

Hitherto you have the words of the Prophet speaking in the name of God; but as

at ver. 8. he had addressed himself to *Immanuel*; so ver. 16. *Immanuel* himself seems introduced as speaking; *Bind up* (speaking to the Prophet, who had just before addressed him) *the testimony, seal the Law among my disciples*; q. d. this which has now been delivered to you, is to be sealed up as relating to distant times. Com. *Dan.* xii. 4, 9. *Apoc.* xxii. 10. *If.* xxx. 8. Seal it among my disciples, or with, or for the use of my disciples, or learned ones, that are taught by me; and I will wait, or yet I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from the house of *Jacob*, and will look for him: Behold I and the children God hath given me, i. e. my disciples that have learnt the same faith, and trust in God, which I practise) are for signs and for wonders in *Israel*, i. e. are exposed to the contempt of the unbelievers among the *Jews*.

In the account which I have given of this prophecy, there are two difficulties;

1. That I make the Messiah to speak the words, which we have ver. 16, 17, 18. when there is no intimation of this in the text; but to this I answer,

- (1.) That in other places the Prophet personates the Messiah, as chap. lxi. beginning.

- (2.) That elsewhere we have interlocutory discourses introduced without any particular notice taken that they are of that kind.

See

see chap. Ixiv, lxv. Chap. xlix. begin. there seems to be an interlocutory discourse between God and the Messiah ; and

(3.) That the context leads to the making such a supposition.

The disciples, ver. 16. are plainly the same with the children, ver. 18.

Now it is evident, the disciples are not the Prophets, for a certain person *speaks to the Prophet*, and orders him to seal the Law *among his disciples* ; and the children are not spoken of as God's children, but the children God had given to *some* one ; we must then find out from the context, some third person, whose disciples and children are here spoken of, and who can that be but *Immanuel*, mentioned ver. 8, 10.

2. Another difficulty in this interpretation, is that according to it, ver. 14. is connected with ver. 10. and not with ver. 13. and ver. 19. with ver. 13. and not with ver. 18.

Now to this, I answer, (1.) That there seem to be some instances of dislocations of prophecies in our present copies ; see what will be hereafter said on the Prophecies of *Haggai*.

(2.) That there seem to be several distinct Prophecies delivered in this chapter, and therefore it is not very strange if the order of them should be somewhat altered.

3. That

(3.) That ver. 14. and 18. are referred by the Apostles to Christ, whereas in our present copies they are referred to the Father; it is probable therefore, they were referred to Christ in the copies the Apostles used.

(4.) As I have shewn already that ver. 14. is admirably well connected with ver. 10. so as to make one intire Prophecy relating to the Messiah, so I shall now shew how ver. 19. is as well connected with ver. 13. so as to make another distinct Prophecy relating to the then circumstances of the Jews. Ver. 11. for the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, say ye not a confederacy to all whom this people shall say a confederacy; i. e. either do not make those alliances they make, or do not fear those united powers against you which they fear; fear not that which is the object of their fear; be not tempted by their victories to worship the Deities they worship; sanctify the Lord of hosts himself (adhere alone to the worship of the one only true God) and let him be the object of your religious fear. And when you shall be tempted to any idolatrous practices, reject the temptation with the utmost abhorrence; ver. 19. when they shall say unto you, seek to them that have familiar Spirits, and unto wizzards that

peep and that mutter, should not a people seek to their God? for the living to the dead?

*Isa.* xlvi. begin. God speaks of his servant, upon whom he would put his Spirit, who should bring forth judgment to the *Gentiles*, i. e. either give Law to the *Gentiles*, or else bring forth his cause to the *Gentiles*, and convince them of the righteousness of it: (thus the Psalmist speaks of God's bringing forth his righteousness as the light, and his judgment as the noon day. *Psal.* xxxvii. 6.) and thus he should bring the *Gentiles* under his dominion, not by force of arms (as *Cyrus* gained a vast dominion about that time) but by reason and conviction, and the isles should wait for a Law from him; the isles, i. e. all those vast countries, which those in *Palestine* could not go to but by sea; see *Mede's works*, p. 242.

*Isa.* xlix. begin. one is introduced as God's servant, not only employed in the gathering *Israel*, but to be a light to the *Gentiles*, and God's salvation to the end of the earth.

*Isa.* lii. 13. to the end; a certain person is introduced as God's servant, exalted and made very high, to the astonishment of nations and kings on account of his greatness, as before he had been their astonishment for his meanness.

Chap. liii. The Prophet continues his discourse in the conclusion of the iid Chap-

ter ; he begins with a complaint of his countrymen's disbelief of the message he brought them, and assigns the reason of it, *viz.* the meanness of the appearance the messiah should make, he should grow up like a mean and despicable shrub springing from a root out of a dry ground, *ver.* ii. therefore he would be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief ; he should be so mean and despicable that the Prophet describes him as hiding his face from the beholders, as ashamed to be seen of them, *ver.* 3. by these afflictions of his, he was to take away and remove our sorrows, and yet we should esteem his sufferings, as inflicted by God, as a punishment of his own sins, *ver.* 4.

In his sufferings he should discover the greatest meekness and patience, *ver.* 7. and on account of his innocence and exemplary behaviour in his sufferings, God would deliver him from oppression and judgment, though he should be cut off out of the land of the living, — *ver.* 8. He would revenge his death on his wealthy and wicked oppressors, *ver.* 9. when his soul or his life had been made an offering for sin, he should rise again from the dead and live to see great multitudes become his disciples, and the great designs God sent him into the world to promote happily taking effect, *ver.* 10. By the knowlege of himself, *i. e.*

of that holy doctrine he came into the world to teach, he should procure eternal life the reward of righteousness not only for God's own people the *Jews*, but even for the *Gentile* world ; the punishment of whose iniquities he should remove by his own obedient sufferings, ver. 11. For this reason God would give him multitudes, vast multitudes as a rich spoil for the reward of his victorious sufferings, because he poured out his soul or life unto death, suffered as a common malefactor, and desired that these sinners from among the *Gentiles* might be given him as the reward of his obedient sufferings, ver. 12. Com. *Dan.* xii. 1, 2. *Rom.* v. 15. *Heb.* ii. 10. *Psal.* lxviii. 18. *Gal.* ii. 15. *Psal.* ii. 8. Upon the mention of the *Gentile* world being given the Messiah for his inheritance, the Prophet breaks out in the following Chapter into an admiration of the vast extent of the Church with this accession of the *Gentiles* to her, which should make her converts more numerous than ever before in her most prosperous days.

Ch. iv. The same subject is continued, and in prosecution of it, a general invitation is made to all of whatever nation to accept of the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, who was appointed a witness, or testifier of the truths of God, and a Governor and Commander of the people, i. e. not only of *Israel*,

*Israel*, but of the most distant nations that were before wholly unacquainted with the God of *Israel*, ver. 3, 4, 5.

Now concerning these several Prophecies, I would make the following observations.

(1.) That Jesus of *Nazareth* exactly answered the characters of God's servant in the xliid Chapter ; he brought forth judgment to the *Gentiles*, produced his righteous cause, and made it successful in the earth, so that even the remotest countries became subject to his government ; and all this he did, with the greatest meekness and gentleness, by meer force of reason and argument, without war and bloodshed the common ways, by which kingdoms are established in the earth.

(2.) Though he has not (as is prophesied of chap. xlix. 5, 6.) gathered *Israel*, which he could not do till *Israel* had been scattered, which it was not at the time of his appearing in the world ; yet his Apostles in his name made so many converts from amongst them, as they could never have done if the facts to which they appealed had been *known* to be false, and in case they were, they must have been *known* to be so, at the time and place when and where they were said to be done.

And though he has not been hitherto, in the fullest sense, God's salvation to the ends of the earth, yet he has so far enlightened

the *Heathen* World, as we may very reasonably collect from what has been already accomplished, that the *whole* Prophecy in its full extent will be accomplished by him in its proper season.

(3.) The general opposition the *Jews* made to Christ would have been a great stumbling block in the way of mens reception of the Gospel, if it had not been wisely ordered by Providence, that this very opposition and the ground of it too, *viz.* his mean appearance contrary to their vain imaginations, should be the subject of a Prophecy, as accordingly it is, chap. liii.

(4.) As a great part of the *Jewish* Law related to sacrifices, so that people were of course well acquainted with the sacrificial stile ; sacrifices among the *Jews*, were to be solemn acknowledgments of a state crime, and such humble applications to the King of *Israel* for mercy, as averted the punishment threatned by the Law of the land ; beasts were offered in sacrifice, *i. e.* the blood of the beast (which is its life) was offered to God in lieu of the life of the offender ; now when it shall be declared, as it is all through the liiid of *Isaiah*, that a certain person there spoken of, bore the griefs and carried the sorrows of God's people, *ver.* 4. was wounded for their transgressions and bruised for their iniquities, *ver.* 5. that God made to fall or light on him

him the iniquity of us all, ver. 6. that he shall bear the iniquities of many, ver. 11. that he shall pour out his soul or life unto death, ver. 12. If this does not mean that this person should by his obedient sufferings procure remission of sins for the penitent; here is an intire discourse framed in such a manner, as to lead the most inquisitive persons into an unavoidable deception.

(5.) As it is declared in the strongest terms imaginable, that this person should die by the hands of wicked men, since he is to be brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, ver. 7. to be cut off out of the land of the living, ver. 8. and his death to be revenged on those wicked persons that were the instruments of it, ver. 9. his life is to be made an offering for sin, ver. 10. he is to pour out his soul or life unto death, ver. 12. And yet, even after this it is declared, he should see a seed, prolong days, and the pleasure of the Lord prosper in his hand, v. 10. This prophecy can agree to no one, but to him, who after having given his life for the sins of men, should rise again from the dead and be exalted by God to a kingdom.

(6.) There is in the xvith Psalm, a Prophecy of a certain person, who should rise again from the dead before he saw corruption, and then enter on the possession of eternal life; now supposing **David** and

*Isaiah* inspired by the same Spirit it will appear probable, that they both speak of the same person, and *David's Prophecy* will give light to *Isaiah's*.

(7.) In the xlth Psalm, *David* declares that God would not accept the the Levitical sacrifices for the expiation of sin, that God had therefore prepared him a body (as the seventy interpreters seem to have read in their copies) and that he came, as it was written of him, to do God's will, *viz.* by completing the design of all former expiations, in offering up the body prepared for him ; it is probable therefore that *David* there personates the Messiah, and points at the very same event which *Isaiah* here prophesies of.

(8.) *Daniel* in the ixth ch. of his Prophecy, determines 70 weeks for the finishing transgression, or restraining transgression, making an end of sins, making reconciliation or expiation for iniquity, bringing in everlasting righteousness, sealing up or making an end of vision and prophecy, anointing the most Holy, ver. 24. these events are dated from the going forth of the commandment to restore, and to build *Jerusalem*, and to reach to the Messiah the Prince, or the time of his anointing to his office, ver. 25. After this (but still within the same week) Messiah is to be cut off, the *Israelites* are to be no more his people, and the Messiah's future

future people (*i. e.*, the *Romans*) are to destroy the city and the sanctuary, ver. 26. Supposing now *Isaiah* and *Daniel* inspired by the same Spirit, would not every one presently conclude, that *Isaiah's* righteous person that is to bear the sins of many, is *Daniel's* Messiah to make reconciliation or expiation for sin by his death? and if so, we are now furnished with another mark by which to know who is the person *Isaiah* speaks of, *viz.* one that should come during the continuance of the *Jewish* state, not long before its dissolution.

(9.) Jesus appeared at this time, he foretold his own death, declared he underwent it for the sins of the *world*, that his blood would be shed for *many* for the remission of sins, that he should lay down his life *for his sheep*, which sheep he intimates would be all well-disposed persons among the *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, John x. 16. At length he voluntarily submitted to death, and underwent it in the manner *Isaiah* describes; his disciples after his death gave out that he was risen again, and that he was exalted by God's right-hand to be a Prince, and a Saviour to give repentance and remission of sins. If the Apostles in this said true, you see there is an accomplishment of *Isaiah's* Prophecy; and for the truth of what they said, they appealed to the gifts of the Holy Ghost; see *Acts*

v. 30,—33. So that the matter is now brought to this short issue, here is a certain person characterized by *Isaiah*, the very time of his coming is fixed by *Daniel*, our Saviour agrees to every character of this person, both in *Daniel* and *Isaiah*; no one besides, that has appeared hitherto, has agreed to all these characters, and none that shall hereafter appear can possibly do it, because the time fixed by *Daniel* is now elapsed; the Prophecy therefore is fulfilled in Jesus of *Nazareth*. Q. E. D.

There are no Prophecies in the Old Testament which contain clearer characters of the Messiah's kingdom, and especially of the past and present state of it, from which therefore, we can better judge whether Jesus hath fulfilled the Prophecies of the Messiah that ought to have been fulfilled at the present, than those in *Daniel*; for which reason I shall give a particular account of them.

Chap. ii. By an image whose head was of gold, his breast and arms of silver, his belly and thighs of brass, his legs of iron, and his feet part of iron and part of clay, are represented four kingdoms as they are called, v. 39, 40. or *Kings*, as v. 37, 44.

Chap. vii. These kingdoms are represented by four beasts, a lion, a bear, a leopard, with four heads, and another beast more terrible than all the rest; these four great beasts are expressly said to be four kings or kingdoms, ver. 17.

Chap.

Chap. viii. There is a vision of a ram with two horns, expressly said to represent the *Medo-Persian* empire, the kings or kingdoms united of *Media* and *Persia*, ver. 20. of an he-goat with one notable horn between his eyes, which when it was broken, in the room of it came up four notable horns towards the four winds of heaven ; now this he-goat is expressly said to represent the king or kingdom of *Grecia* ; the great horn between his eyes, the first king, and so the state of the empire under him ; the four horns that stood up in the room of that when broken, the four kingdoms that should stand up out of this nation, into which therefore the empire should be afterwards divided.

Nothing can be plainer than that the he-goat, Chap. viii. represents the kingdom of *Greece*, and the several horns the several divisions of that empire ; and the comparing the vision in this chapter, with what we have chap. vii. will make it evident, that the fourth kingdom there described must be the *Roman* ; in that chapter all the four empires are represented by as many beasts, the *Babylonian* by a lion, the *Medo-Persian* (which is made the second in the viiiith chapter) by a bear ; the *Grecian* (which is said Chap. viii. to succeed the *Medo-Persian*, and is there divided into four parts, which are in this viith chapter, represented by

by four heads) by a leopard; and then another beast is described more terrible than all the rest, representing certainly not the divided state of the *Grecian* empire, which had been before figured by the four heads of the leopard, and which chap. viii. is expressly said to be the weaker state of that empire, but another kingdom distinct from all the rest and more powerful than all, which should in its latter state be divided and weakned by foreign mixtures, by the inroads of foreign nations, Chap. ii. 40,--44. out of which shall arise ten kingdoms, towards the declining state of the empire, and one remarkable one, that before way can be made for its being set up must destroy three kingdoms; the particular characters of this kingdom, are blasphemy against God, and persecution of his true worshippers. Chap. vii. 19,--26. it is expressly said, that these four beasts are four kings; Chap. vii. 17. i. e. four kingdoms, ver. 23. The last of these therefore, must be the *Roman*, to which all the characters there given do exactly agree, which was more powerful than all the former empires, brought to a declining state by the inroads of the barbarous nations, out of which in that state of declension arose ten kingdoms; and one remarkable one, viz. the *Papacy*, which in order to make way for its settlement destroyed three kingdoms, viz. of the *Greeks*, the

the *Longobards* and the *Franks*, which extended their dominions into *Italy*; see *Mede's* works, pag. 463, 661, 779. which has blasphemed the God of heaven, by claiming his prerogative of a dominion over conscience, and worn out the Saints of the most High, by the persecution of those that adhered to the pure worship of God, without the mixture of idolatry, or the worshipping of God by any mediums not of his appointing, as *Images*, *Saints* and *Angels*.

But to return to the Prophecies, Chap. viii. The He-goat, as has been before observed, represents the third or *Grecian Empire*; the great horn represents *Alexander* himself, and the state of the Empire under him: the four horns that come up in the room of it, his four chief commanders, and the state of the Empire under them. The little horn, ver. 9. that came out of one of them, one particular Prince, the characters of whom exactly agree to *Antiochus Epiphanes*; to wit, that he should live in the latter period of the *Grecian Empire*; that he should be a fierce and politick Prince, strong by means of his alliances, successful in his wars, particularly against the *Jews*; that he should exalt himself against the God of heaven, and be at last destroyed by an invisible hand, ver. 23, 24, 25.

The vision of the evening mornings is perfectly distinct from the Prophecy relating

ing to *Antiochus Epiphanes*. It is plain from the explication of that Prophecy, ver. 23. to 26. that as it begins, ver. 9. with the account of the rise of the little horn ; so it ends with the account of its full growth, which prepared the way for its destruction ; when it should magnify itself against the Prince of the Host, or the God of *Israel*, take away the daily sacrifice offered him, and cast down the place of his sanctuary, ver. 11. endeavouring to root out the true Religion, after that the people of God (call'd here the Host, or Host of Heaven, ver. 10, 11, 12. comp. with *Josb.* v. 14.) had been given over, for the transgression against the daily sacrifice ; that is, for their readiness to comply with the idolatries of the *Heathen*, and to neglect the Temple-services. Com. v. 12. with 1 *Mac.* i. 11, &c. 2 *Mac.* iv. 13, &c.

After this *Daniel* has a vision perfectly distinct from the foregoing one (see and com. ver. 13, 14. 26.) concerning the period of time, in which the Sanctuary and the Host are to be trodden under foot ; or in the language of our Saviour's Prophecy, of the same event, in which *Jerusalem* is to be trodden down of the *Gentiles*. This relates to the time of the end, ver. 17. the last end of God's indignation against his people, v. 19. Accordingly the vision was to be shut up, because it should be for many days, v. 26. See and comp. ch. vii. from v. 25. to 28.

That

That the Prophecy there delivered, cannot refer to the persecution of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, his polluting the sanctuary, and the cleansing it by *Judas Maccabeus*, is plain,

(1.) Because from the pollution of the Temple by *Antiochus*, to its cleansing by *Judas*, was not above three years, *i. e.* not above twelve hundred days. Now if you suppose this to be *a real prophecy*, that can't be the sense of it which does not agree with the event; or if, with the Author of the *Literal Scheme*, you suppose it an history of what had happened, the Author could not represent the time from the pollution to the cleansing of the sanctuary to be more than twelve hundred days, these being events so well known at the time when he writ.

(2.) Because the Angel tells *Daniel*, he would make him know what should be in the last end of the indignation, *i. e.* plainly at the time of the conclusion of those miseries God would suffer to come on his people, whilst the last empire should wear out the Saints of the most High, before the Saints of the most High should take the kingdom. Chap. vii. 25, 26, 27. The vision therefore of the evening mornings, *ver. 26.* or of the 2000 and 300 evening mornings, *ver. 14.* is ordered to be shut up, because it was *for many days*, *ver. 26.*

Chap. ii. 44. it is said, that in the days of those kings, *i. e.* before these kingdoms as

as they are called, ver. 39. should be wholly destroyed, whilst the last of them should be in being, viz. the fourth or Roman, the God of heaven would set up a kingdom, a kingdom which should never be destroyed, which should not be succeeded like the former ones by any other kingdoms; but having destroyed the former ones, viz. by the destruction of this last, the only remaining one of them (as the last Empire is represented destroying all the former ones, and establishing it self in their room, viz. by the destruction of the third Empire, chap. ii. 40.) should it self be established for ever. chap. ii. 44, 45.

This kingdom at its first rise, is to make but a mean appearance like an unshapen stone; it is not to be erected by human and visible means as the other kingdoms were, but by an extraordinary interposition of divine Providence: At length it is to have an amazing increase and settlement in the world, to grow as it were from an unshapen stone, to a vast mountain, and to cover the whole earth; and lastly, to destroy that Empire, during the continuance of which it first had its rise, and thus to put an end to all the *Gentile* monarchies represented by the gold, the silver, the brass, and iron of *Nebuchadnezzar's* image. Chap. ii. 34, 35, 40, 45.

Chap. vii. the same kingdom to succeed the fourth or *Roman*, is more particularly described, to shew that it was (as had been represented, chap. ii.) a kingdom of God's setting up, in the extraordinary way of his Providence, so as the former kingdoms were not. The thrones or seats of judicature (after the manner of the *Jews*) are represented as set for the senators; one as the *pater judicij*, the principal person in judgment, is described as sitting on his throne, and the senators assisting him in judgment, as sitting round him on so many thrones, to represent the great Judge, and the numerous host of his Saints as ministering to him in the judgment. The consequence of this judgment is the destruction of the last monarchy, and the erecting another kingdom in its room, v. 26, 27. To shew by whom the affairs of this kingdom are to be managed, one like a son of man, or one in the appearance of a man, is described as coming with the clouds of heaven, or with the attendance of Angels, which, when God executes any great designs of Providence by the clouds, are described as managing and directing them; see *Pf.* civ. 3, 4. and being by them brought before the *pater judicij*, and then receiving from him an *universal* and everlasting dominion, v. 13, 14.

Lastly, This kingdom is such, as that the Saints of the most High, or the pure wor-

shippers of the one only true God, are to have a share in it, particularly the pious *Jews*, who are called the holy people, chap. viii. 24. who are the Saints of the most High, that the fourth beast is to wear out, chap. vii. 21, 22, 25. com. chap. viii. 24, 25. which the Author of the *Literal Scheme* himself interprets of the *Jews*.

That by the Saints of the most High, to whom this kingdom is given, can't be meant the *Roman* state, as the Author of the *Literal Scheme* would have it, is plain,

(1.) Because this is described as a kingdom of God's own setting up, in such a manner as the other Empires were not: This is represented by a stone cut out of the mountains without hands; a kingdom that is erected by no human means.

(2.) Because this is the kingdom of the Saints of the most High; *i. e.* the worshippers of the true God; whereas the *Roman* Empire in its most flourishing state was idolatrous; and it is ridiculous to suppose a *Jewish* writer to call an *Heathen* state by the name of the Saints of the most High.

Now Jesus of *Nazareth* has set up a kingdom without human and visible means, by an extraordinary discovery of the power of God in its behalf, during the continuance of the last of these Empires, a kingdom different from all the former Empires in the nature of its laws and sanctions, as well as

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the methods and means of its progress; but a kingdom that has taken already such a large and deep root in the world, not only without, but against human power, art, and policy, by the mere force of its own excellent constitution, and the power of God engaged in its behalf, as may assure us of the accomplishment of every thing that remains to be accomplished, relating to the last state of this kingdom.

It is pretended by the Author of the *Literal Scheme*, that the kingdom of Christ can't be meant by that which was given to the Son of man in *Daniel*.

(1.) Because his bears no resemblance to the other Empires he had described.

*Ans.* It bears a resemblance to them, in all the points in which *Daniel* represents it as agreeing with them, and differs from them in every point of difference he describes, which the *Roman* does not; it is a *real* kingdom, but not from this world, but erected by the peculiar Power and Providence of God; it had at first a mean appearance, but soon after took a large spread, and that in such a manner as gives us all reason to suppose it will answer *Daniel's* other characters of being universal and perpetual; it is a kingdom in whose benefits none but the Saints of the most high God have any share.

(2.) Because Christ has erected no kingdom at all.

*Ans.* Christ, while on earth, declared he should receive all power in heaven and earth, and as an evidence of it, that he would pour out the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Accordingly this was done, and the Apostles published certain laws in the name of Christ as Lord of all, and brought as their vouchers these gifts of the Holy Ghost. Upon the evidence thus given, many large societies of men every where have received those laws, as the laws of one who has received authority from God; and on the same evidence of the gifts of the Holy Ghost do reasonably expect the execution of these laws from Christ at the end of the world. There are two states of this kingdom plainly distinguished by *Daniel* by the stone *before* and *after* it became a great mountain, chap. ii. 34, 35.

In the ixth chapter, *Daniel* is represented as taking a view of the miseries of his country, and the desolations that had been brought particularly *on the city Jerusalem*, ver. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20. and humbly representing these in prayers before God; and whilst he was thus praying for the holy *mountain of his God*, the Angel *Gabriel* is sent to him with this message, ver. 20, 21, 23. *Seventy weeks*, ver. 24. *are cut out, or cut off for thy people, and thy holy city, &c.* q. d. As you have before had an account of the miseries to be brought on your nation, and of the end of them in the visions of the

four kingdoms (see chap. ii. 7, 8.) so let me tell you of what is to befall you in the intermediate space; as there were seventy years determined by the prophecy of *Jeremiah* to your deliverance from the captivity which is now near; so from the long account of your nation's calamities, there are cut off (see the like use of the word which the Seventy here use in *Is.* x. 22, 23, xxviii. 22.) seventy weeks of years, or four hundred and ninety years for the finishing transgression, making an end of sins, making reconciliation or expiation for iniquity, bringing in everlasting righteousness, sealing up, or making an end of vision and prophecy, from which, when thus complete, you shall receive all the light you need 'till the anointing the most Holy, or investing the Messiah in the office of his publick ministry; ver. 25. I have now given you an account of the great events you are most concerned to know, and the time allotted for them.

I come now to acquaint you with the time from which these are to take their date, even from the going forth of the message (*i. e.* of some King or other, or of God by him) to restore and to build *Jerusalem* (or to rebuild *Jerusalem*, as afterwards the street shall return and be built, or be rebuilt) for I have the comfortable news to tell you under the present apprehensions from the

desolations of *Jerusalem*, that the street shall be built again, and the wall, tho' in troublous times, (when you shall be fain at the same time to be fighting against their enemies, and carrying on the building) from this time, I say, to the Messiah the Prince, or the anointing the most Holy, shall be seven weeks and half, or fifty two years and half (as *Africanus* and *Tertullian* read in their copies,) and sixty two weeks and half, or four hundred and thirty seven years and half, i. e. fifty two years and half to the ceasing of prophecy; and four hundred thirty seven and half, from thence to the publick ministry of the Messiah; and then ver. 26. after these sixty two weeks and half (but within the same week, to shew that every event mentioned ver. 24. particularly the making expiation for iniquity, must fall within the seventy weeks) shall Messiah (the Prince ver. 25.) be cut off (from *Israel*) and they shall be no more to him (for a people) and the Prince's (i. e. Messiah's, ver. 25.) future people (the *Romans* in whose Empire his kingdom was set up) shall utterly destroy the city and sanctuary. Ver. 27. in order the better to carry on the war, he, i. e. the Messiah's future people, shall in one week make a firm covenant, enter into a league with many nations, and in half, in the latter half of it pursue the war, till he has caused the sacrifice and oblation

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to cease, and on the battlement (of the Temple) placed the abomination that maketh desolate, or the idolatrous ensigns the sure presages of the desolation of the *Jews*, which is to continue on them, 'till the consummation or the consumption, even the determined consumption (see *Is.* x. 22.) be poured on the desolation; *i. e.* 'till the Saints of the most High take the kingdom, chap. vii. 18. 'till the last end of the indignation, chap. viii. 19. 'till he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, chap. xii. 7.

And now as to what relates to the time past in this prophecy, that the anointing of the Messiah was just four hundred and ninety years from the commandment here referred to for the rebuilding *Jerusalem*; see proved in Mr. Whiston's Supplement, &c. and after this time was complete, tho' within the last week the Messiah was cut off, and then the *Jews* were rejected from being his people; and upon this the Messiah's future people, *i. e.* the *Romans*, came and utterly destroyed the city and the sanctuary, after a war, to carry on which with the more success, they made a league with the *Parthians* and other nations, and in prosecution of it, caused the sacrifices to cease, and brought their idolatrous ensigns into the Temple. *Vide Joseph. Ed. Huds.* p. 1269, 1283.

Thus the nation of the *Jews* was made desolate, and this desolation we see still continued on them (they being, according to the predictions of *Moses*, scattered among all people from one end of the earth even to the other end of the earth, and become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations whither the Lord has led them, *Deut.* xxviii. 37, 64.) the end of their desolations is the part of this prophecy which remains to be fulfilled; and the exact fulfilment of the other parts gives us a rational assurance of the fulfilment of this in its season.

In the account above given of this prophecy, every part of it, I think, is taken in the plain literal sense; I allow the Author of the *Literal Scheme* his own translation of the beginning of it, *viz.* abbreviate or cut short; and yet I think he can make no advantage of the concession. When the Prophet says, that seventy weeks are cut short, or cut off, the most obvious sense of his words is, that as there has been a larger account given of the affairs relating to his people and city, this seventy weeks is as it were a small remainder cut off from that long account: Thus the same word here used in the *Greek* version is applied, *Is.* x. 22, 23. tho' the people of *Israel* be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved, finishing and cutting short *outréance*, the account in righteousness; because

because the Lord will make *a short account*, λόγον συγτετμήμενον, in the whole earth. But when it is said that seventy weeks are cut short, or cut off, no propriety of language will admit of their being cut off from each other, as seven weeks, sixty two weeks, &c.

In the 24th verse there is the whole period of seventy weeks, with all the events mentioned that are to fall out in it; what was wanting was to assign the beginning of this period, and what particular events belonged to the several parts of this large period; this therefore you have done, ver. 25. the seventy weeks are to begin from the going forth of the word, i. e. either the edict of some King, or God's message delivered as it were by him; for thus the word is used in this context, ver. 2. *I understood by books the number of the years*, whereof the word or message of the Lord came to Jeremiah, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem. Thus ver. 23. At the beginning of thy supplications the word or message (that I was ordered with) came forth, or the word or message came to me, and in compliance with it, I am come to shew thee the following things. The word ver. 24. can't be, I imagine, the word of prophecy, for that might be given a considerable time before the event, but an order for the accomplishment of the event, because it is intimated, that immediately on this

this word going forth it should be executed; the word was to rebuild *Jerusalem*, and upon this, the street was to be built again and the wall, *i. e.* the city was to be rebuilt, since the building the wall for a defence, and the furnishing the street, or *Area* girt by this wall with houses was properly a building the city; and as the prophecy of *Jeremiah*, accomplished by *Cyrus*, did not relate to any such rebuilding the city, but only restoring the *Jews* and rebuilding the Temple; and as it is plain that *Nehemiah* afterwards found the city in rubbish, without a wall, and without houses, and by order from the king of *Persia* furnished it with both, we are evidently pointed to that edict, by virtue of which he acted, for the beginning of the seventy weeks; and it is no objection against this, that then *Daniel* could not fully understand his own prophecy: He understood the most important points of it, and all that it concerned him to know: He was concerned for the ruins of his city, he was then assured it should be rebuilt; the exact time when that should be, was not of consequence, it would be at that time God saw fittest and best; from that time whenever it should be to the accomplishing several other important things, which he was made acquainted with, would be seventy weeks; it was of consequence to *Daniel* to know that these events should be accomplished, but the design

design of fixing the exact time for their accomplishment was not for the use of *Daniel*, but of those that should live near the time of their accomplishment, that their expectations might be raised, and that they might be prepared for them; and also of those in whose days the events should be accomplished, that they might be assured the events they saw were those designed in the prophecy.

According to the account of this prophecy above given, here are three remarkable events mentioned together, *ver. 24.* and all to be accomplished within seventy weeks from the royal edict to rebuild *Jerusalem*, *viz.* the ceasing of vision and prophecy ; for which there is a distinct period, *viz.* of seven weeks and half, the anointing the most Holy, to which another distinct period is assigned, *viz.* sixty two weeks and half, which together complete the seventy weeks ; and lastly, the making reconciliation for iniquity, *viz.* by the death of the Messiah, which was to happen after the seventy weeks were complete, but still within the last week, or before another week was begun.

Now here it must be owned on the one hand, that there is nothing in the text that necessitates us to break the periods in the manner that is here done, and to assign these distinct events to them ; but then on the other hand, I think it must be allowed the words do fairly admit of this sense; and then if

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the event agrees with this interpretation and no other, I imagine we have sufficient proof that this was the intended sense. See Mr. Whiston's Supplement, &c.

The cutting off the Messiah is most naturally interpreted of his being cut off by death, according to the common use of the word; but then there is something more that is often implied in this word as it is used in Scripture, viz. a Prince's being cut off by death from the relation he bore to his people, and this, as Mr. Mede most judiciously observes, suits admirably well with the context in this place; ver. 26. after sixty two weeks and half shall Messiah (the Prince ver. 25.) be cut off (from *Israel*, understand) and they no more for him (viz. as a people; thus the shortness of the Prophet's expression is easily accounted for, and the ellipsis supplied from the immediately following words) and the Prince's (*i. e.* Messiah the Prince's, for it is the same word used here as was, ver. 25. concerning the Messiah, and there is no other Prince but him mentioned in the whole context,) people to come, or future people, *i. e.* the *Romans* in whose Empire the Messiah's kingdom was set up, shall by war destroy the city and the sanctuary.

*Ver.* 17. there is one week, perfectly separate from the seventy weeks foregoing, assigned to quite different events, allotted to

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the affairs relating to this war ; in one week, he, i. e. the Messiah's future people spoken of just before, shall make a firm covenant with many, i. e. shall enter into a league with several nations the more quietly and securely to carry on the war with the *Jews* ; and in half, i. e. the latter half of this week shall pursue the war 'till it end at last in the destruction of that miserable people. See very exact account of the accomplishment of the events relating to this week, in Mr. Marshall's excellent treatise of *Daniel's seventy weeks*, from p. 265. to the end.

Thus I have given such an account of the seventy weeks, as refers them to the Messiah, and makes them exactly accomplished in Jesus, his publick ministry, and death as an expiatory sacrifice for the sins of men : I shall now fairly represent the sense which the Author of the *Literal Scheme* puts on this prophecy, and offer some reasons why I cannot fall in with it ; he imagines the Author of this pretended prophecy lived in the days of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, and that all the events mentioned by him end in the polluting the Temple by *Antiochus*, and the cleansing it by *Judas Maccabeus* after three years, and the death of *Antiochus*, which was in the same year ; he understands the seventy weeks of weeks of years, as we do, but divides the weeks thus, seven weeks cut off from sixty two weeks, and each of these begun

begun from the same period, viz. the prophecy *Jeremiah* had in the fourth of *Jehoiakim* of a return from captivity, and of building the city again; that as there are two periods mentioned, seven weeks, and sixty two weeks from the same fourth of *Jehoiakim*, so there are two Messiahs to whom these periods are to reach, the one *Cyrus*, the other *Judas Maccabeus*.

*Cyrus* became a Messiah when he took possession of the kingdom of *Media*; see *Literal Scheme*, p. 171. And thus was a Prince chosen by God to be a restorer of his people to their antient habitations, and to resettle their antient worship; and this part he makes to have been accomplished before the pretended date of this prophecy, *id.* p. 171, 173. *Judas Maccabeus* was a Messiah then, when he flourished in the High-Priesthood, p. 171. After sixty two weeks another Messiah, viz. *Onias* the High-Priest, is to be cut off; and then an army under the conduct of a Prince, viz. *Antiochus Epiphanes* is to destroy the city and sanctuary. In the last week, this Prince is to allow the Jews their way of worship, but in the midst of the week he is to cause their sacrifices to cease, to place on the battlements of the Temple the idols of the desolator, which shall continue till the end of that week, and of all the weeks, after which the desolator shall have vengeance paid him in his turn, and

and the *Jews*, (under the conduct of *Messiah Judas*) regain their liberty.

Now to this account, I would object,

(1.) That tho' it be allowed this Author, that the word we translate *determine*, signifies *to cut short*, yet that does not at all make for his interpretation, which supposes the seven weeks and sixty two weeks are cut off from each other, and so to be begun from the same period: Thus the very foundation of his whole interpretation is weak.

(2.) Every one sees how unnatural it is by *Messiah the Prince* to understand **not** one single person, but two persons to come at very different times, if there be no grounds to suppose the seven weeks and sixty two weeks cut off from each other in the manner he imagines.

(3.) *Cyrus* can't be a *Messiah* here meant, because he was made *Prince of Media* before the supposed date of this prophecy. Now if we should allow our Author that this prophecy was forged after the event; yet as it is attributed to *Daniel*, who is supposed to receive it in the first of *Darius the Mede*, according to the Author of the *Literal Scheme* himself, after *Cyrus* was King of *Media*, the forger of this prophecy must be out of his senses, to attribute that to *Daniel* as a prophecy of his, which *Daniel* had seen fulfilled with his own eyes.

(4.) Nor can *Judas Maccabeus*, accord-  
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ing to this Author's own account of a Messiah, which is, *a Prince chosen by God to be a restorer of his people*, be one; for *Judas* was not invested in any such office, was not made any such publick person 'till after the destruction of the city. See *Joseph.* Edit. *Huds.* p. 536. *1 Maccab.* iii. 1. Nor therefore,

(5.) Can *Onias* be the third Messiah, since *Onias* was cut off, before *Judas* was a *Messiah*; i. e. according to this Author's account before the *sixty two weeks were fulfilled*.

(6.) The prophecy of *Jeremiah*, in the fourth year of *Jehoiakim*, can't be the time for the beginning of the seventy weeks.

1.) Because that prophecy could not be fulfilled 'till after seventy years, whereas 'tis intimated, that the command to rebuild *Jerusalem* should immediately be executed.

2.) Because the prophecy of *Jeremiah* referred to the restitution of the *Jewish* state and the rebuilding the Temple, and not directly to the rebuilding the city which is here particularly described.

3.) The event did not answer, if the words are interpreted this way, since the city was not rebuilt, 'till the order which *Nehemiah* afterwards received from *Artaxerxes*, according to our copies in *Nehemiah*, or *Xerxes* as *Josephus* has it. See *2 Chron.* xxxvi. 23. *Ezra* i. 3. *Neb.* i. 3. ii. 3,

3, 8, 13. iv. 1, 2, 6. vii. 4. com. *Dan.*  
ix. 16, 19, 20, 25, 26.

(7.) The people of the Prince that should come, ver. 26. must, according to all natural construction, be the people of Prince Messiah, (for no other Prince is mentioned in the context,) i. e. either of *Cyrus*, or *Judas Maccabeus*, according to this Author.

(8.) All other prophecies of *Daniel* reach to the grand restoration of the Jews in the latter days; this I have already proved of all that we have yet met with, and shall hereafter prove of the rest; and therefore 'tis most reasonable to suppose this prophecy also belongs to the same great events. The vision of the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of desolation, in the viiiith chapter, I have already shewn, can't be referred to the times of *Antiochus Epiphanes*; and the reason assigned for that will shew the same concerning the prophecy of the same event in the xiith chap. and then we have all the reason in the world to refer the same prophecy in the ixth chap. to some more distant event also.

(9.) When ver. 27. it is declared that he (i. e. according to our Author, the Prince before mentioned, or Prince *Antiochus*) should make a league with many of the Jews in one week, and immediately after, it is declared, that in the midst of the week

or in half of the week, he should break that league by acts of hostility, would not any one reasonably suppose that here was a whole week assigned for these two great events, and that the former half belonged to the first mentioned, and the latter to the last; whereas the covenant *Antiochus* made with the *Jews* (if barely not persecuting them can be called making a covenant with them) continued for near a whole week; for he did not begin his persecution of the *Jews* till the sixth, nor complete the ruin of *Jerusalem* till the eighth year of his reign.

*Coroll. i.* We see the reason of the general expectation of the Messiah about the time when Christ appeared, this prophecy of *Daniel* and no other having assigned the exact time of his coming. The Author of the *Literal Scheme* indeed would have it, that the antient *Jews* did not understand this to be a prophecy of the Messiah, and he grounds his supposition on this, because they imagined the Messiah was to live for ever; but it is evident they could learn the very name of the Messiah, which they gave to the person they expected, from no other Prophecy. And the reason assigned by this author is insufficient for the proof that they did not understand this as a prophecy a Messiah; since the evidence for this might be so great

great as even to force their assent, whilst at the same time their prejudic'd opinions concerning this person, might lead them to pervert the plain sense of the Prophecy, just as the Chaldee Paraphraſt (who was bigotted to the Jewish notions of a worldly kingdom) yet interprets the liid of *Isaiah*, of the Messiah.

*Coroll. 2.* We see the wisdom of our Saviour's preparing the way for the settling his Gospel amongst men, by preaching that the kingdom of heaven, i. e. the time God had fixed by *Daniel* for the setting up his kingdom, was at hand, the characters of which kingdom the Jews were thus called on to examine, and determine the justice of Jesus's pretensions thereby.

*Coroll. 3.* We see the reason of our Saviour's continually speaking of an exact time being fixed for his sufferings, since the time of his sufferings was thus marked out in the Prophecies of *Daniel*.

*Coroll. 4.* We see what our Saviour means by those signs of the times, which he reproves the Jews for not observing.

*Carol. 5.* We see why our Saviour refers to the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, as a sure sign of the near approaching desolation of *Jerusalem*; to which therefore he requires the strictest attention from those that should see it.

In the xith of *Daniel*, after some pre-  
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dictions relating to the third kingdom, the fall of which is dated with *Macedonia's* becoming a province to the *Romans* by the *Heathen* historians, and accordingly ends, in *Daniel's* account, in *Antiochus Epiphanes*, ver. 21,---32; he describes ver. 36. a King that should do according to his will, claim the most absolute sovereignty, exalt and magnify himself above every God, set himself up above all the nations of the earth, and the several Deities that were supposed to preside over them, speak marvellous things against the God of Gods, persecuting the people of God till the time come for God's deliverance of his people, by putting an end to this tyranny; he shall not regard the God of his fathers, (throwing off the worship of the Gods of his country) nor the desire of wives, discouraging marriage, together with God in his seat, he shall honour Protectors, even together, with the God whom his father knew not, shall he honour them with gold and silver, &c. He shall do service to the images of these Gods protectors, jointly to the foreign God whom he shall acknowledge and increase with glory; and he shall cause them to rule over many, and divide the land to them for gain.

Now as several parts of this description will never suit *Antiochus Epiphanes*, (with whose times the Prophet had done before

he came to this description ; see ver. 32, 33, 34, 35.) so it all exactly agrees to the *Roman* state, which claimed the most absolute sovereignty in the world, which set itself up above all kingdoms and states, and persecuted the Saints of the most High; which at length threw off the worship of the Gods of the country, and then began to discourage marriage, till at last it was absolutely forbidden to an order of men amongst them, that regards no power on earth, and by claiming dominion over conscience, sets itself in the seat of God himself ; that honours together with Christ (a God that the old *Romans* knew not) other mediators, to whose images it pays religious service, whom it supposes the Guardians and Protectors of particular countries, viz. Saints and Angels ; see on this subject Mr. Mede's incomparable discourse of the apostacy of the latter times.

*Daniel* 12. There is a Prophecy of a time when *Michael*, one of those Angels to whom God had committed the presidence over particular countries, and to whom was committed particularly the care of God's own people the *Jews*, shall stand up and deliver *Israel* from those times of great calamity that shall come on the earth, ver. 1. Com. *Zech.* xii. throughout.

After this, ver. 2. many, or the many, the vast numbers of mankind that are dead

(the many, ver. 2. being opposed to the children of thy people, ver. 1. q. d. the whole body of mankind, Gentiles as well as Jews; see the like use of the phrase, Isa. liii. 11, 12. Rom. v. 14, 15. Heb. ii. 9, 10, 11.) shall arise, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt; ver. 3. and they that be wise, or that make men wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, (shall rise again with bodies of light and glory, Com. Mat. xiii. 43. 1 Cor. xv. 41, 43.) and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever; these words Daniel is ordered to shut up, ver. 4. and seal the book till the time of the end, before which the Prophecy would not be well understood. Ver. 11. there is a Prophecy, that from the time the daily sacrifice should be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, should be one thousand two hundred and ninety days. As this prophecy, (I believe) has not been hitherto fulfilled, it does not fall within my province to consider it; but that it does not refer to the cleansing of the sanctuary by Judas Maccabeus, is I think plain from hence, that from the pollution by Antiochus to the cleansing by Judas were but three years, i.e. not above one thousand two hundred days: after this Antiochus Epiphanes lived not above

above four months, and within fifteen days of his death, the order was issued out by his successor *Eupator* in favour of the Jews, which demonstrates that one thousand and three hundred thirty five days, ver. 12. does not relate to that event; see and Com. 1 *Mac.* iv. 5. 2 *Mac.* xi. 23, 33. See *Mede's Works*, pag. 717. 1 *Mac.* vi. 16.

Ver. 13. It is promised *Daniel*, that at the end of the days mentioned ver. 12. he should stand up *in his lot or course* (the same word that is used of the courses of the priests, 1 *Chron.* xxiv. 5.) that is, that he should be raised up, when God's appointed time came for his *particular* resurrection, (as *every one* according to the Apostle's doctrine exactly agreeing with this Prophecy of *Daniel*, shall be raised) *in his own order*, ἐν τῷ ἴδιῳ τάγματι. See 1 *Cor.* xv. 23.

*Mic.* vi. 1. God assures his people, that *Babylon* which should lay siege against them, and treat the judge of *Israel* with contempt, should be besieged herself; and that all their depopulated cities should again hold up their heads, particularly *Bethlehem Ephrathah*, which should make no mean figure by the birth of the great Ruler in *Israel* there, ver. 2.

The words of the Prophet, ver. 2. *From thee shall he go forth to me, that is, to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting, do not suit*

well to *Zerubbabel* or any temporal Prince; from thee shall he go forth to me, or out of thee shall arise that ruler in *Israel*, who shall go forth to accomplish my will, as he has done in ages long since past; or in thee shall he be born, who has before that had an higher original from of old, from everlasting; either the two nativities of this great Ruler as Son of man, and Son of God, or his two commissions to go into the world and execute the will of God, the one before, the other at the time of his being born at *Bethlehem*, are plainly referred to.

*Ver. 3.* The Prophet describes the miseries they should endure before the birth of this great Prince, but their deliverance from them at last, when the full time came that was appointed by God for it; when *ver. 4.* *Israel* should stand and feed, or rule, in the strength or by the power of the Lord, and they, the people of *Israel* shall abide; when he, i. e. *Israel*, shall be great to the ends of the earth; when, *ver. 5.* the land shall have peace, even though the *Affyrian* comes into it; see the Seventy's translation of the fourth and fifth verses.

*Haggai ii.* There is a clear Prophecy of the Messiah's coming to his temple, and of an universal peace which he is to spread through the world from thence. In order to the full explication of which, I would premise the following things.

(1.) That

(1.) That in all inquiries into the sense of Prophecies, it is supposed incumbent on the interpreter to find some rational consistent sense ; it is previously supposed that the Prophets so called, are not mad *Enthusiastical* writers, that had no ideas at all to the words they used.

(2.) It is taken for granted, as a thing already proved from the accomplishment of Prophecies relating to times past, that there was a true prophetick Spirit in the *Jewish* church.

(3.) It must be ever supposed by an interpreter of prophetick books, that such books are genuine.

(4.) These things supposed, when in such books there are certain expressions that are fairly capable of a sense, in which the prophecy may *possibly* be fulfilled, as well as of a sense in which it is *not possible* to be fulfilled, the former, and not the latter sense ought to be put on them.

(5.) If there are running through the Old Testament, certain characters of an eminent person to appear at such a time, and to do such, and such things ; when there has a person appeared *at the time fixed*, and done what the Prophecy required to be done *at that time*, it is probable the same person will fulfil in the proper season, what yet remains to be fulfilled of the Prophecy.

(6.) Therefore, that sense of the Prophe-  
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cy which agrees to the foregoing supposition, ought to be admitted; if there be no reason to the contrary.

(7.) Though to suppose corruptions in the Old Testament merely to account for the citations from it in the New, is unfair; yet as the supposition itself of such corruptions is not absurd, nay is supported by plain fact; when it can be easily shewn in a particular case, *how a disorder might creep into the copies of the Old Testament, that there actually is such a disorder, and an easy method is assigned for the rectifying it, and at the same time for the reconciling the Old and New Testament together,* this I think may be admitted as a very fair, and natural solution of the difficulty.

The Prophecies of *Haggai* relate to the building the temple in the second year of *Darius*; the first of them we have, chap. i. It was designed to spirit them up to the building, and accordingly had its desired effect, ver. 14, 15. and, under the conduct chiefly of *Zerubbabel*, on the 24th day of the 6th month they begin the work. On that day on which the foundation of the temple was laid, God sends them, ch. ii. ver. 10. an encouraging message to stir them up to continue the work so happily begun, promising plenty from that day forward, ver. 10—20. This day is here, ver. 10. in our present copies, called the 24th

of

of the 9th month ; but as it is plainly the day when they began the work, so that disorder, as I take it to be, will be easily corrected from ver. 15. of chap. i. And as it is plain this Prophecy was given immediately after the laying the foundation, it is evident, it must be before that chap. ii. 1. which was given after they had made considerable progress in the work. On the same 24th day of the 6th month, a message came also to *Zerubbabel* as the Principal in the work to give him particular encouragement, chap. ii. 20, 23. and again the word of the Lord came to *Haggai* in the 24th day of the month, saying, speak to *Zerubbabel* governour of *Judah*. In that day, saith the Lord of Hosts, (at the time before-mentioned in the message delivered to the people, viz. from the day the foundation of the temple was laid) will I take thee *Zerubbabel* and make thee as a signet ; the latter part of the 21st, and the whole 22d verse, I imagine was inserted by a transcriber, who was at a loss what *that day*, ver. 23. should refer to ; and thinking it belonged to the Prophecy in the beginning of the chapter, inserted some words of that Prophecy in this place, to make it clear what was meant by *that day*, ver. 23. And then perhaps, some later transcribers finding the same words repeated in so short a compass, might think there was some error

ror in the copy, and so drop the words which we have ver. 22. from the Prophecy in the beginning of the Chap.

But to go on with the account of the Prophecies of *Haggai*. These two messages on the 24th day of the 6th month had likewise their desired effect ; the people under the conduct of *Zerubbabel* proceed in the building, but because they might be discouraged by seeing how far the building came short of *Solomon's* temple, God sends another message on the twenty first day of the seventh month, ch. ii. 1. declaring that he was with them, as he covenant-ed to be, when he first took them for his people, bringing them out of *Ægypt* ; that as he then made great alterations in the earth in order to their happy settlement in *Canaan*, so he would make one, and but one such alteration more, in order to *their perpetual* settlement under that great person, who was the main subject of the Prophe-cies ; and therefore easily known, tho' not named ; who should come into a temple more noble and magnificent than ever had been formerly, and whither after preparatory convulsions had been made in the world, the choice of all nations should be brought. At the giving the Law, God shook the earth, and made great alterations in the world, in order to the settlement of that polity he was then erecting : but before this

this last settlement, God would make yet greater alterations, shaking not only the earth, the nations, and governments thereof, but the heavens also, new modelling the governments in them, by spoiling the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, that all things might be delivered into the hands of the Mediator. See and Com. *Eph.* iv. 8. *Col.* ii. 15. *Heb.* i. 10. xii. 26, 27, 28. See also, Mr. Peirce's excellent note on *Heb.* chap. xii. ver. 26, 27, 28. in his learned Commentary on that Epistle.

The shaking the earth is explained by the Prophet himself, by shaking the nations and the kingdoms of the earth; and then shaking the heavens may very naturally refer to the altering the government in them: and especially, when this interpretation is put on the words by an inspired Apostle, *Heb.* xii. 26, 27, 28. and in exact agreement with the event; the pouring forth the gifts of the Holy Ghost, discovering that all power in heaven and earth was put into the hands of Jesus, the appointed Mediator between God and men.

*Zeck.* chap. i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii, viii. The Prophet is sent in the second year of *Darius*, after the laying the foundation of the temple, to encourage them with promises of success, of God's prospering

*Jerusalem*

*Jerusalem* again, and making her a flourishing city again, settling her in such peace and prosperity, that many very Considerable Proselytes should, as in the Days of *David* or *Solomon*, come up to worship there, claim a relation to the God of *Israel*, and desire an interest in the blessings of his people.

Chap. ix, begin. The Prophet denounces God's judgments on some of their neighbours, such as *Hedrach* and *Damascus*, *Hamath*, *Tyre*, and *Sidon*, and the country of the *Philistines*, which were accordingly afterwards executed on them by *Alexander the Great*. Ver. 7, he tells them, that as for those of the *Philistines* that were not destroyed, they should from what they saw of the prosperity of the *Jews*, become proselytes to their Law; ver. 8, that God would secure his house at *Jerusalem* from all attacks of enemies, as tho' he had pitched a camp round it. Ver. 9, that *Jerusalem* should be preserved till her king should make a solemn entry into it, in such a manner as should shew they were secure from all enemies. He should ride like a meek and peaceable Prince, safe and secured from all attempts against his city or people. He assures them ver. 10, that under the government of this Prince, there would be such peace and security from the favour of God attending him,

that

that there would be no need of those weapons of defence, that are commonly made use of, (Com. *Hof.* i. 18. *Mic.* iv. 3. v. 10, 11.) and he should not only establish peace amongst that people, but to the very ends of the earth.

Accordingly *Jerusalem* was again, after the delivery of this prophecy, made a prosperous city, and preserved till the coming of the Messiah ; who answers exactly the characters of a Prince here set down, a meek and peaceable Prince, making a quiet and peaceable entrance into the city, without any arms of defence ; establishing his kingdom among the *Heathen*, and diffusing peace throughout the world. At the time when Jesus appeared, there was a general peace over the *Roman* empire ; *Jerusalem* and the *Jews* were then in that peaceful and safe state the Prophet describes them in ; he made his entrance into the city as King of the *Jews*, just in the manner, here represented ; and he made such numbers of converts among the *Heathens*, as may serve also so many earnest and pledges of the bringing in the fulness of the *Gentiles* to him. From hence to the end of the Chapter, the Prophet particularly describes the victories the *Jews* should obtain over the *Greek* powers, and their consequent safe and flourishing state, which

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was to be before the solemn entrance of this great King into the city.

Chap. x. He promises them that plenty which they had not, before their beginning the building of the temple, ver. i. Com. chap. viii. 9. *Haggai* i. 11. and which they in vain expected from their idols, ver. 2. In the rest of the Chapter, he goes on to describe their prosperous state under the *Persian* and *Greek* empires.

Chap. xi. He represents *Jerusalem* under the figure of a mighty forest cut down and destroyed, to show her ruin, I suppose by the *Roman* power, after her establishment described Chap. ix. which should last till *Messiah's* solemn entrance into the city, ver. 9. Ver. 4. the Prophet is ordered to feed the flock destined for slaughter, for the sake of the poor of the flock; ver. 7. to signify God's care of the few pious persons amongst the *Jews*, who should have the offers of the blessings of his kingdom, when the rest were destined to ruin.

Ver. 7. the Prophet is ordered to take to him two shepherds rods, the one called pleasantness and delight, to signify the delight they formerly took in God, and he in them; and the other bands, to signify the union formerly between the several parts of their nation, as *Israel* and *Judah*, and their firmness and security against any opposing powers, with whom God as it were entered into

into a covenant, that they should not destroy *Israel*. These two rods he is ordered now to break, in the general to denote God's leaving the care and government of that people. Accordingly the Prophet, who was ordered, ver. 4. to feed this flock, wholly throws off the care of them v. 9. In particular, the breaking the first rod, pleasantness or delight, signifies God's taking no more delight in them, but laying them open, and exposed to the fury of all nations that sought to destroy them. Ver. 10. In consequence of this they would soon be destroyed, which would clearly shew to the meek and well disposed persons amongst them, that the hand of God was engaged in this affair, to fulfil the words of his Prophet, ver. 11. The breaking the second rod signified the breaking the union, and peace between the several parts of the kingdom, (as when *Israel* first separated from *Judah*) which should make way for its utter destruction, ver. 14.

Ver. 12. the Prophet is sent with a message to the people, who were before represented as the flock he had been feeding, to know of them what hire they would give him for his service; they accordingly weigh for his hire thirty pieces of silver, which the Prophet is ordered to reject as too small and inconsiderable a price, and commands it to

be given to a certain Potter ver. 13. (for a field of his, *Mat.* xxvii. 10.)

As the Prophet in the beginning of this chapter represents the destruction of *Jerusalem*, after its settlement under the *Persian* and *Greek* powers, down to the coming of Christ when they were tributaries to the *Romans*, and therefore its destruction by the *Romans*; and yet ver. 4. is commanded to feed this flock; and then by God's order demands of the people his wages for this work, which they appoint him: This action of the Prophet's, like innumerable others, must be a typical action. The Prophet must stand for some other person, and his feeding the flock represent God's taking care of it at that time, *viz.* just before their destruction by some one of whom the Prophet is made a type. And every particular here exactly agrees to our Saviour; he appeared in the world a little before the destruction of *Jerusalem*; he offered the blessings of God's kingdom to the *Jewish* nation, on account of the few well disposed persons among them; upon their rejecting them they were devoted to destruction; schisms and divisions prepared the way for their destruction, which was completed by God's breaking the covenant made with all people, *viz.* that they should not destroy *Israel*: Thirty pieces of silver was actually the price at which they sold their Messiah, of whom the Prophet is here a type,

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a type, by which they shewed the low value they set on his care in feeding, *i. e.* in guiding and instructing them; and it was so ordered by God's Providence, that with this price was bought a Potter's field, as was here represented by the typical action of the Prophet in taking, according to God's order, that sum of money, and buying with it a field of a certain Potter.

I would observe here, for the farther clearing this argument, that tho' according to this interpretation the Prophet is made a type of the Messiah, yet this is not amongst those types which Dr. Sykes so well argues against, but amongst those which he allows at the conclusion of his excellent discourse on that subject. A distant time is spoken of, certain events are to fall out at that time, these events are figured by certain actions of the Prophet; he then by whom these things were accomplished, at the time pointed at, was the person intended in the Prophet's discourse. We are led then by the Prophet himself to look to some distant time, and to another person besides the Prophet to fulfil certain things foretold in that time; and the event shews us who that person is; St. Matthew chap. xxvii. 9, 10. quotes the words of the Prophet thus, καὶ ἐλαβον τριάκοντα ἀργύρια — καὶ ὅδωκαν αὐτὰ εἰς τὸν σύρραυτον κεραμέως, καθὰ συνέταξε μοι Κύριος.

Now here it should seem, as Mr. Mede  
B b 2 judici-

judiciously observes, that ἐλαβον is in the first person singular, not the third person plural, and then ἐδωκει must be in the same person and number, whether the , be paragogical, or an antient slip of the scribe; that this must be so, appears from the following words, *as the Lord commanded me*; and that for *Beth Jehovah* in the Prophet, the Evangelist would have us read *Bedath Jehovah*, according to the word or command of the Lord. See Mr. Mede's works p. 786.

I will only add concerning this prophecy, that our Saviour seems to refer to it when he represents himself as the true Shepherd, and describes the false teachers that had risen up among the Jews as hirelings, &c. See *Jo.* x. 1—5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. and com. with *Zeck.* xi. 4, 5, 15, 16. com. also *Mat.* xv. 13. with *Zeck.* xi. 8. 17.

*Zeck.* xii. the Prophet after having predicted in the former chapter the destruction of *Jerusalem* by the *Romans*, foretels in this the rebuilding of it in the latter days, and the vengeance God would execute on its enemies, *ver.* 1—9. Then God will pour on the house of *David*, and the inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, the Spirit of favour, or mercy, and supplications, or lamentations, they shall then look on him whom they pierced, *viz.* the Messiah, whom they had sold to his enemies in order to be put to the death of

of crucifixion, Chap. xi. 12. Com. *Matt.* xxvii. 9, 10. and mourn for him as for an only son, *ver.* 10. Then there should be a general mourning, as when some great person that is very ancient dies, all the families related to him mourning a part by themselves: Thus shall all the families of the *Jews* in the latter days, of all orders and degrees, mourn for their Messiah, whom there ancestors have pierced. And they shall not mourn in vain, for as the Prophet continues his discourse, Chap. xiv. they shall be forgiven their Sins, and received to God's favour again *ver.* 1--- then all idolatrous practices shall be intirely destroyed from amongst them, *ver.* 2---- to the end. Chap. xiv. the Prophet represents the *Jews* enemies, as making attempts on their peace and quiet, even after this happy settlement, but as destroyed by the power of God, in an extraordinary manner exerted, in the *Jews* behalf. The pure worship of the one only true God is now to be revived amongst them; and this attended with such peace and prosperity of the worshippers, as should draw the eyes of other people to them, and tempt them to fall in with it.

*Mal.* i, ii. God severely rebukes both priests and people for the great corruptions among them, particularly in the matters of his worship.

Chap. iii. He tells them that he would

send his messenger before his face, in allusion to the manner of great persons, that have their forerunners to prepare the way for them ; and then the Lord whom they sought, *viz.* that great Person whom they expected to accomplish God's promises to them, shall suddenly, *i. e.* soon after the appearance of his messenger or forerunner, come to the Temple, as a noble palace erected for him as the King of *Israel*, even that which *Ezekiel* saw in vision, and has described in the last Chapters of his Prophecy ; which was to be erected in the latter days, when *Judah* and *Israel* were to be restored to their own land, and to become one nation again ; which is to be built at that time, when *Israel* is to be settled in their own land never to remove more, 2 *Sam.* vii. 10, 13. into which, after the shaking of all nations, the choice of all nations shall come, *Haggai* ii. 7. Even the Messenger of the Covenant, *i. e.* either he who brings the notice of that new Covenant God will make with the house of *Israel* in the latter days, *Jer.* xxxi. 31. or the covenant of life and peace God made with *Levi*, thus referring to what is said Chap. ii. 4, 5. which covenant he shall revive, by restoring the pure and undefiled worship of God, and reforming the worshippers, as well as those that preside over the divine service in such a manner, that the offering of *Judah* and *Jerusalem* may be pleasant

sant to the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years, ver. 3, 4. of ch. iii.

It seems very evident, that this Prophecy refers to the second, and not the first coming of Christ.

(1.) Because at Christ's first coming he did not enter the Temple as *the Lord of it*, since he did not openly declare himself the Messiah during his ministry; he appeared on earth not in the form of God, as before his incarnation, but in the form of a servant, and took on him the character of a Prophet till after his resurrection, by which he was declared the Son of God with power; he often entered the Temple, but then only as a common worshipper, or in the character of a Prophet.

(2.) Christ did not then refine and purify the Levitical services, ver. 3. but declared the destruction of the Temple, and by consequence of the Temple services.

(3.) It cannot be said that upon what Christ did then, the offerings of *Judah* and *Jerusalem* became pleasant to the Lord, ver. 4. for they were never more hateful to him.

(4.) The *Jews* were not then settled in peace and prosperity, so as to become a very pattern, as of holiness and obedience, so of the blessedness resulting from it to all nations, ver. 12. on the contrary, they were even then rejected by God, and soon

after destroyed. In the ivth Chapter, there is a Prophecy of a day of vengeance on the wicked, but of mercy to the upright.

But before the coming of this dreadful day, God promises to send *Elijah* the Prophet, to convert the whole nation, fathers and children to God, lest in this day of God's vengeance, finding the *Israelites* continue in their obstinate opposition to his methods of grace, he should smite the land of *Jewry* with a curse. It is very plain, I think here also, that the Prophecy refers not to the first coming of Christ; for

(1.) The day of vengeance described Chap. iv. 1. is plainly the same with what we have Chap. i. 2. which has been before proved not to relate to Christ's first coming.

(2.) Though it might possibly be allowed that turning the hearts, ver. 6. might signify no more than doing what is *sufficient*, though not *effectual* to that purpose, yet that can never be the sense here, because it is plainly intimated that what *Elijah* should do, would *prevent* God's smiting the land with a curse; whereas on the other hand, his doing what was *sufficient* for their reclaiming, *without effect*, would be the very reason of God's smiting the land with a curse; as accordingly *John the Baptist*, the true *Elias*, declares that on this account God would smite the land with a curse, *Mat. iii. 10.* And the event has verified

*John's*

*John's prediction.* Our Saviour has expressly declared *John* to be the *Elias* that was to come ; but as there are two cominges of the Messiah foretold, so there may be reasonably supposed two appearances of his forerunner. It must be acknowledged, that the places which speak of the Messiah's forerunner, do relate to the time of his second coming ; but according to the analogy of God's providences, it is very reasonable to suppose that both cominges of the Messiah should be preceded by a forerunner, just as at both cominges of Christ, the Law is to go forth from *Jerusalem* : Our Saviour does declare *John* to be the *Elias*, but not that he has already done every thing belonging to his office, any more than by declaring himself the Messiah, he declared that he had fulfilled every thing belonging to the Messiah at his first coming ; on the contrary, our Saviour mentions something, as part of *Elias's* office, which it is plain *John* has not as yet fulfilled, viz. restoring all things, or turning the hearts of children and fathers to the Lord, which was to be before the Son of man's coming *in glory*, of which there was a lively representation at his transfiguration ; see *Mat. xvii. 10, 11, 12.*

When the Jews sent Priests and *Levites* from *Jerusalem* to *John*, to ask him who he

he was, particularly whether he were *Elias*, i. e. according to the meaning of their question, *Elias* appearing in his own person, he answers, that he was not, which was strict truth: but then to prevent their mistakes, as if he hereby declared that he was not the forerunner of the Messiah, he represents himself as that person, in the language by which *Isaiah* had described him. *Elias* according to the genius of the Hebrew language, may as well signify one in the spirit and power of *Elias*, as *Elias* in person; just as *David* signifies the son of *David*, that is to sit on his throne in the latter days. And when long after *Elias*'s death there is a prophecy of his coming, it is every whit as natural and easy to interpret that of one to come like *Elias*, as of *Elias* himself; nay much easier, and more natural, if the observation the ingenious Author of the *Literal Scheme* makes be true, viz. that in the interpretation of Scripture that sense which implies the least of a miracle, or any thing supernatural, is to be preferred.

It must be owned, that *Elias* can't signify one in the spirit and power of *Elias* without a figure; but then, as the ingenious Author of the *Literal Scheme* excellently well observes on another occasion, a figurative sense may be a very plain and easy sense, and *fixt by the context*, and *a literal sense* also,

as

as that word is used in opposition to *mystical*, and *allegorical*. Upon the whole it is prophesied that *Elias* shall come before the coming of Christ. The question now is, whom we shall understand by *Elias*, *Elias* in person, or one like *Elias*? For the first it is pleaded, that that is the most strictly literal sense; but then it ought to be considered, that the most strictly literal sense is not always the true intended sense; neither is it, when the whole context is considered, the most obvious sense. It is farther said, that the *Elias* is here characterized as *Elias the Tishbite*. I answer, that is no more than saying plainly *Elias*; and if *Elias* may signify one like *Elias*, so may *Elias the Tishbite*, just as if *David* may signify one like *David*, so may *David the son of Jesse*, or the *Bethlemite*, &c. For the other sense, we plead,

(1.) That in other places, when a person is prophesied of as doing something after the death of the person commonly known by that name, that person is another that is to be like him. Thus *David* who is to reign over *Israel* in the latter days, is the Messiah who is in some respects to be like *David*; see *Ezek.* xxxvii. 24. com. *Jer.* xxiii. 5, &c.

(2.) That there is somewhat in the context that leads to our sense. *Elias* is spoken of, this we interpret of one like *Elias*; accordingly

cordingly such an one is described, *viz.* a great reformer raised up by God, by his doctrine of repentance to prevent the ruin of a sinful people.

(3.) Tho' it be no good rule of interpretation, to prefer always that sense of Scripture, which implies the least of a miracle, (because on some occasions there may be reason to expect a miracle, (as when on *Abaz's* refusing any sign in heaven or earth, the Prophet declares to the house of *David*, that he himself would give them a sign, *Behold a virgin shall conceive, &c.*) yet where there is no reason for a miracle, the natural sense is certainly to be preferred to the supernatural; because it is not reasonable to suppose God would depart from the common methods of his Providence, but for weighty causes. Now it is plain that one in the spirit and power of *Elias* would answer all the same purposes, as *Elias* in person ; he would be as effectual a preacher of righteousness, and would be known to be the intended forerunner of the Messiah the same way, in which alone the literal *Elias* could be known to be he, by those who never saw him when living on earth, *viz.* by fulfilling the work allotted the true *Elias* in the Prophet.

## C H A P. XXIII.

*Of the method of the Apostles in quoting the Old Testament, and a general account of their manner of arguing from such citations.*

THAT this matter may be well understood, I would lay down the following propositions.

1. That since the Apostles in many instances appear to be consistent and fair reasoners, we may claim for them the same privilege that belongs to all such writers, *viz.* that when their quotations do certainly prove nothing, and do not appear by any particular stress laid on them, to be brought to prove any thing, they be only taken for allusions and illustrations; that when they do *effectually* prove the point proposed, but not *directly*, then they be considered as importing arguments *a pari* only.

2. We may well suppose, how there might *originally* be very clear proof that a text of the Old Testament belonged to the Messiah, whereas such proof, may not appear to us now. It might be an agreed point between the Jews and the Apostle, that the part of Scripture referred to, be-

longed to the Messiah ; all then that he had farther to do in his arguings with them, was to shew the truth of the interpretation he put on the words, and the justness of his conclusions from thence.

The Apostle's reasonings are to be considered not as *immediately directed to us*, (in which case, he must have argued in a very different way, and drawn out his reasonings to a much greater length,) but to the *Jews at that time*, who might on *good and solid grounds* be satisfied of many things, for which we, *at this distance of time*, not only do not, but cannot see the same clear evidence, as they easily might.

3. If we can (as indeed we can in many cases) see *probable* evidence, *at this distance* of time, of the justness of the Apostle's interpretations, we may easily allow for this evidence rising much higher to those of *that age*.

4. The conclusion drawn against Christianity, from the Apostle's method of arguing is manifestly wrong ; it is deduced thus, there is no evidence *now appearing* for the Apostle's interpretations, therefore they are wholly groundless ; but this is manifestly a wrong way of reasoning.

We show the Apostle's authority as one sent of God to be established by miracles, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, it is then *probable, judging a priori*, that his interpretations.

tations in matters of considerable consequence to that doctrine he is commissioned to teach, and confirm, are just ; in many instances we evidently see they are so ; in many more that they probably are so ; and in many more that they possibly may be so, for any thing that appears to the contrary. And this, I think, is abundantly sufficient to clear a difficulty of this nature, and the very same method exactly, that a *Deist* would take with an *Atheist*, to remove the objection of the seeming irregularities in the creation, the uselessness of some parts, noxiousness of others, &c.

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## C H A P. XXVI.

*A particular account of the citations of the Apostles in the New Testament of any parts of the Old, as far as they design'd them as argumentative.*

**T**HAT we may have a clear and full view of this matter, it will be convenient to go through the Epistles, and observe the manner in which citations are made in them from the Old Testament. I shall therefore run over the Epistles in

the order of time, as it is settled by Dr. Mill, with this view.

*1 Thess.* ii. The great apostacy in the church is referred to, as a thing that it was well known, *viz.* from *Daniel's Prophecies*, (wherein Mr. Mede has shewn it is clearly delivered,) should happen before the coming of Christ.

*1 Cor.* i. 19. The Apostle observes, that by the method God took in the Gospel dispensation, he discovered his own power, and poured contempt on the methods of human wisdom, as God delights to do, according to the constant declarations of Scripture. Chap. vi. 2. he supposes it a thing known to them, *viz.* from *Daniel's Prophecy*, Chap. vii. 9, 10, 22. that the Saints shall judge the world. Chap. x. begin. He answers a plea they made for their eating of the sacrifices in the Idol Temples, *viz.* that hereby they escaped great dangers, and yet run no hazard as to their spiritual state, having put themselves under the divine protection, and engaged themselves to Christ by Baptism, and the Lord's-supper; to this the Apostle answers, that the ancient *Israelites* were taken under the divine protection, and devoted to his service, by being under the cloud and passing through the sea, as much as they could pretend to be by Baptism, and that they eat of the manna, and drank of the water of the rock that followed

followed them, which were as proper emblems and representatives of Christ, and his benefits, as the bread and wine at the Lord's supper; and yet that God destroyed many of them for the like views to those the Corinthian Church now indulged, as lusting after forbidden meats, as they did after the heathen sacrifices, keeping a feast to an idol, as they partook of the sacrifices to an idol in the very idol's temple; committing uncleanness, as one amongst them who was encouraged by a considerable party did; tempting Christ who was their head and guide, by distrusting his power to preserve them in an ordinary way, and trying whether he would not exert extraordinary acts of it for their support, as they did by running into the greatest danger of idolatry, and yet expecting Christ should preserve them from it, and also distrusting Christ's power to preserve them from persecution in the ordinary way of their duty, without such dangerous compliances; lastly, murmuring at God's ministers, *Moses* and *Aaron*, as they did against Christ's, viz. the Apostles, and falling in with *Corah*, *Dathan* and *Abiram* in opposition to them, as they did with the false Apostle against *Paul*.

*1 Cor.* xiv. 21. There is a citation from *Isa.* xxviii. 11, 12. to this purpose. After God had used all proper means of instructing his people by his Prophets, he then

threatens to send people of another language against them, who by punishing them for their sins, might cure them of their infidelity; thus you see, says the Apostle, tongues are not for the instruction of believers, though they may be used as proper signs in order to convince infidels, just as God's bringing up a strange nation against his people, according to his threatening, was adapted to convince them that he was the great Governor of the world, and to break them off from their attachment to idols.

*1 Cor. xv. 3.* where it is said that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, very probably the plain and direct accounts of this matter, *Isaiah* liii. are referred to. And *ver. 4.* it is taken notice of as a doctrine of the Old Testament, that the Messiah should rise again the third day, *viz.* because it was declared, *Psal. vi. 10.* that he should rise before he saw corruption. From *ver. 24.* to *ver. 28.* the Apostle proves that believers must be raised again, because it was declared in the Old Testament, *viz. Psal. cx. 1.* and *viii. 6.* that the Messiah should reign till all his enemies were put under him, and so till death the last enemy, and he that had the power of death, *viz.* the devil, *Com. Heb. ii. 14.* were utterly destroyed. *Ver. 44, 45.* he shews the difference between the body we have now from *Adam*, and the body we shall receive

receive at the resurrection from Christ, the former an animal, the latter a spiritual one; just as the Scripture declares of the first *Adam*, that he was a living soul, *i. e.* that he had a body, which as it was framed of the dust, tended to corruption, but had a soul given it, which should continue life to it as long as God pleased: but the second *Adam* had a superior principle, *viz.* the Spirit, which should quicken his mortal body, and raise him to eternal life.

*2 Cor.* vi. 2. There is a citation from *Isa.* xlix. 8. to this purpose. St. *Paul* had in the conclusion of the former Chapter, spoken of the ministry of reconciliation as committed to the Apostles, who were ambassadors of God, sent in order to reduce men to their allegiance to him, ambassadors in the stead of Christ, the great Apostle and High-priest of our profession, who as he prosecuted, so first proposed the terms of reconciliation; now then, continues the Apostle, we as workers together with God, labouring under him for your salvation, beseech you to accept the favourable offers that are now made even to *you Gentiles*, God having heard the Messiah's prayer for the success of his message, and given him already to be a light to the *Gentiles* in part, as an earnest and pledge of the full accomplishment of his promise of making him the restorer of *Israel*, and his salvation even to

the end of the earth, *Isa.* xlix. 3--9.

*Ver.* 16. He argues that they should not be unequally yoked with unbelievers, from their peculiar relation to God, and his presence with them as his people, which is not less than was formerly with the *Jewish* church; *Com.* *Lev.* xxvi. 12. And as when the *Jews* are represented as in *Babylon*, the place of their captivity, they are exhorted to keep free from the idolatry of the inhabitants, and when set free, joyfully to forsake that nest of idols, *Isa.* lli. 11, 12, so by analogy we may argue, that we who bear not a less strict relation to God, should keep from the pollutions of the world, and the society of idolaters; and then, as we are not in a less strict relation, and nearness to God than his ancient people the *Jews*, we may expect he will shew us the favour belonging to his children, according to the main purport and tenor of God's promises to them.

*Ram.* ix. 7. The Apostle argues very strongly the justice of God's chusing the believing *Gentiles* in the room of the unbelieving *Jews*, from God's choice of *Isaac* before *Ishmael*; that is, of a believing obedient person of the natural seed of *Abraham*, before one that was of the same natural seed, but of contrary dispositions; of one that was given to *Abraham* out of the common way of God's providence, by particular

ticular promise, with design that in him might be accomplished the great promises made to *Abraham*, before one that was born to *Abraham* in the common way of nature, and concerning whom there was no such promise made.

And of the posterity of *Jacob* the younger, before those of *Esau* the elder brother; though when the choice was made, neither the one, nor the other of these brothers had done either good, or evil.

*Ver. 15.* He argues the justice of God's exercising a prerogative in sparing, or punishing the guilty, from what God said to *Moses* in the case of the rebellious *Israelites* Exod. xxxiii. 16. and from his dealings with *Pharaoh*.

*Ver. 25, 26.* He shews that it is as reasonable for God to chuse the *Gentiles* for his people, though before they were not so, as it was at any time, to chuse the *Jews* again for his people, when for their sins they had been justly rejected.

*Ver. 27, 28, 29.* He shews that God's rejecting the main body of the *Jews*, and chusing so small a number out of them for his people, may be justified by parallel instances of God's dealings towards them in time past.\*

*Rom. x. 5.* The Apostle shews the difference between the Law of works, and faith,

\* See Dr. Clark's admirable Discourse on Rom. ix. 23, 24. and the Review. pag. 247, 248.

from the Law of *Moses* itself. After God had set before the people of *Israel*, by *Moses*, those Laws which were to be the *statute Laws of their kingdom*, he shews them what would be the happy consequence of a *national* obedience, and what the miserable consequence of a *national* disobedience.

As to the latter of these, he foretels, that upon their revolt from God, he would scatter them amongst *all nations* of the earth; but notwithstanding, upon a *national* return to him, he would return in mercy to them, *Deut. xxviii. ad fin. comp.* with Ch. xxx. at the begin. This seems to refer to their last grand captivity by the *Romans*, to which all the expressions he used do most exactly suit. And upon their restoration from that, God promises, *Deut. xxx. 6.* to circumcise their heart, and the heart of their seed, to love the Lord their God, with all their heart, and with all their soul, that they might live; which is exactly the tenour of that new covenant God promises to make with *Israel* in the latter days, directly opposed to the old covenant which he made with them when he brought them out of *Egypt*, *Jer. xxxi. 31--34. xxxii. 38--40. Ezek. xxxvi. 25--28.*

The Apostle, *Rom. x.* as he had represented the tenor of the Law by a quotation from *Leviticus*, shewing the term of life proposed in it to be obedience, *Lev. xvii. 5.* represents

represents ver. 6. the method of acceptance by faith, in the language of *Moses* also ; shewing the easiness of coming to the knowledge of Christ's precepts, and the no great difficulty of observing them, *Deut.* xxx. 11, 12, 13, 14. The language of the law of faith is not who shall ascend up to heaven to fetch the knowledge of it thence? or who shall descend to the deep? (as the Apostle turns it differently from the original, the better to accommodate the words to his purpose) but the word is nigh thee, even in thy heart, and mouth, clearly and fully revealed to thee, easy to be retained, and professed on all occasions.

Now says the Apostle, this is the very language of faith, and exactly suits the method of justification by that : Consider this as a covenant God made with the people of *Israel* relating to *national* blessings, and it will very well suit the Law of *Moses* as the condition of that covenant; but if you consider the Law as appointed for a method of justifying *particular persons*, it is not easily kept, i. e. so perfectly, as to give a right to life by the observance of it. But now this description exactly suits the Law of faith, and this Law *Moses* had not obscurely revealed to the *Israelites* in the very same discourse, where these words are found ; so that the Apostle does not, I apprehend, merely accommodate the words of

*Moses* to his own purpose, but direct their view to that part of *Moses's* discourse, where they might see the new covenant plainly described, viz. *Deut.* xxx. 6. where it is represented just in the same manner, as he himself observes it is elsewhere described in the Old Testament ; see *Heb.* viii. 8. Having thus produced these words of *Moses*, to answer the purpose he was aiming at, the Apostle very beautifully glosses on *Moses's* words, the better to accommodate them to his designs, *Rom.* x. 6. Who shall ascend into heaven, to fetch the knowledge of the Law of faith thence, as if the knowledge of it were very difficult to be attained ? whereas whatever difficulty there was of that kind, it is all surmounted now, since Christ has descended from heaven to bring us the knowledge of it ; or who shall descend to the deep, as tho' it were to fetch Christ from the dead, who is already risen for our justification ?

*Ver.* 11. He prooves that the *Gentiles* are to partake of the privileges of the Messiah's kingdom, as well as the *Jews* ; because whoever believed on that person, whom God appointed as the corner-stone to unite, and support the intire building of his church, composed of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, should not be ashamed, according to *Isa.* xxviii. 11. and because, according to *Joel's* Prophecy, chap. ii. 28---32. when God should pour out his spirit on *all flesh*, whoever called on

on the name of the Lord should be saved. *Ver. 14.* &c. from its being prophesied that the *Gentiles* should call on the name of the Lord, he argues they must believe on him; and therefore that the Gospel must be sent to them; and consequently that the Apostles were justified against the *Judaizers* accusations, in their preaching it to them.

The Apostles were then to preach this good news to *all*, and to some it would prove as welcome news, as that to the *Jews* of their deliverance from captivity, *Is. lii. 1.* And if others rejected it, this was no more than was prophesied of the *Jews* themselves, at the first mean and low appearance of their own Messiah to them, *Is. liii. 1.* And sad experience had sufficiently vouched the truth of the prophecy. But be the message received as it would, it must be (as the Apostle, resumes the argument, *ver. 17.*) first sent by the Apostles to these *Gentiles*, e'er they can answer God's design in receiving it. *Ver. 19.* he shews from *Deut. xxxii. 21.* and *Is. lxv. 1, 2.* that the chusing the *Gentiles* in the room of the unbelieveing *Jews*, was expressly prophesied of.

*Ro. xi. 8.* he shews that their rejection was owing to their incurable temper, like their fore-fathers, described *Is. vi. 9.* and *xxix. 10.* and their abusing the greatest mercies, particularly the offer of life *through faith*, to their ruin; to which purpose he accommodates

modates David's words, *Ps. Ixix. 22. Ver. 26.* he shews, that at last, it was the design of God, according to the express prophecy of *Is. lix. 20.* to save all *Israel* by the Messiah.

Chap. xiv. 10, 11, 12. the Apostle very justly argues, that we must all give an account of our selves to God, by appearing before the judgement-seat of Christ, from *Is. xlvi. 23.* where it is declared, that every knee shall bow to God, and therefore all must be subject to him, who is by God's appointment, their Lord, and Judge.

Chap. xv. 3. he argues, that we ought to condescend to others for their good, and not to aim chiefly at the pleasing our selves, in imitation of Christ's example, who most fully answered the character given, *Ps. Ixix. 9. Ver. 21.* he shews the reasonableness of his conduct, in preaching the Gospel where it had not been before preached from hence, that this was ever the design of God's Providence, according to the intimation of the Prophet concerning the *Gentile* Kings being admitted to the knowledge of the Messiah and his doctrine, to which they had been before utter strangers, *Is. liii. 15.*

*Gal. iv. 21.* the Apostle argues by way of analogy, from the story of *Agar*, and *Sarai*, and the children of each, to which he resembles the old law given from *Sinai*, and the new law(or Gospel) given from *Jerusalem*, and

and the disciples of the one, and the other of these. The children of both these women were *Abraham's* seed. The son of the former as the mere natural seed of *Abraham*, and there was no exertion of the extraordinary power of God in the birth of that seed; the seed of the latter was given by a particular promise, in fulfilling which the peculiar Providence of God was discovered: The seed of the former as born of a bond-woman, was not intituled to the inheritance; the seed of the latter born of a free-woman, and by particular promise intituled to inheritance, became heir of course, as the seed of the former, tho' the first-born, was yet not intituled to the inheritance, and was at last turned out of the family for persecuting the seed of the latter: The descendants from the former who was married to *Abraham* in the vigor of his days, were not so numerous, as those from the latter, who did not conceive by *Abraham* till his body was already dead. The resemblance runs exactly thus. Those that are under the law from *Sinai*, merely, are *Abraham's* seed only according to the common course of nature; those that are under the law from *Jerusalem*, are his seed by an extraordinary exertion of the Power, and a peculiar interposition of the Providence of God. The former are in bondage not intituled to the inheritance, the latter have an express title, by peculiar promise,

mise given them, to it ; the latter are vastly more numerous than the former ; the former persecute the latter, and therefore shall very soon be *actually disinherited*. Now from these similar cases thus put, the Apostle argues thus.

(1.) That it does not follow, that those who were of the law were heirs, merely because the children of *Abraham*, since *Ishmael* was not, who was a child of *Abraham* as well as *Isaac*. And as it is certain that *Ishmael* was excluded the inheritance, tho' a child of *Abraham*, so the Apostle had proved before, that those who were of the law only could not be intituled to the inheritance, but must be considered as in bondage.

(2.) That as God most justly *actually disinherited* *Ishmael* a child of *Abraham*, for persecuting *Isaac* the seed of the promise, so God may with like justice disinherit those of the law, for persecuting believers, who are the true seed, to whom the promised inheritance belongs ; since none can have a right to the blessings of *Abraham*, but by the promise of God, and the promise of God had originally confined them to the faithful seed.

*Eph.* iv. 8. the Apostle argues, that we ought modestly to use the gifts of the Spirit for the common good of the Church, since they were according to the prophecy *Ps.* lxxviii. all bestowed by Christ at his ascension, in

in such measures and degrees as he pleased.

Chap. v. 14. there is a reference to *Is.* ix. 1. to this effect. When the Jewish Church is become Christian she is described as in a state of light, and commanded therefore to awake out of sleep, to rowse up herself in order to partake of the benefit, and pleasure of light; so you Gentiles are now brought out of the state of darkness in which you lay, the light of the Gospel hath shone upon you, and accordingly you should rowse up yourselves from your sloth and security, that you may partake of the benefit of this light. The Apostle seems to paraphrase the words of the Prophet; *arise*, saith the Prophet; *arise from the dead*, saith the Apostle; *be enlightened, or lift up your eyes to receive the light*, saith the Prophet; *awake thou that sleepeth*, saith the Apostle; *for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee*, saith the Prophet; *and Christ shall give thee light*, saith the Apostle.

Chap. vi. 2, 3. the Apostle reasons by way of analogy from God's promise of prosperity to dutiful children among the Jews, in the land of Canaan, to his extending his favourable regards to the same dutiful behaviour every where.

I Pet. i. 11. the Apostle reasons thus, we ought to love one another; if those are obliged to love each other, who are only born of the same earthly parents, intituled to the same

same temporal inheritance, much more ought they to love one another, who are begotten by God their immortal Father, to an eternal inheritance, by the word of the Gospel, or the good news of God's kingdom now set up under the Messiah, which is to endure for ever.

Chap. ii. 4. he shews that the Messiah was to be a corner-stone to unite the whole building of God's Church, and so would be valued by all true believers, tho' according to the prophecies of him, he were rejected by the Jewish masters.

## C H A P. XXVII.

### *Of the supposed arguments ad homines in the New Testament.*

SOME very learned, and very worthy persons have thought, that it is not inconsistent with the just characters, and due honours of the Apostles, to conceive them as sometimes mistaken in their reasonings, and particularly in their arguings from the Old Testament prophecies. They consider the Apostles chiefly, if not solely as witnesses of facts, and imagine that their character considered in this view is perfectly clear, that

that thus Christianity has sufficient support, and stands clear of all difficulties. But I would beg leave to ask of these Gentlemen a few questions: Did Christ leave a system of doctrines, and laws, in writing himself? If he did not, whom did he commission to transmit his doctrines to distant ages, but the Apostles? But were they, without the direction of the Spirit, qualified for this, *i. e.* were plain illiterate men, fit to relate long discourses in another language than they were spoken, and such discourses as they often did not understand? You allow the Apostles to be true witnesses of facts; But is not this one of the facts related by *John*, that Christ promised to send his Spirit to lead them into all truth, and to bring what he had said to their remembrance? Did not Christ particularly instruct his Apostles in the prophecies relating to the Messiah's sufferings, resurrection, and call of the *Gentiles*? And are not these the very prophecies we find them immediately after Christ's ascension urging to *Jews*, to their conviction, or silence? Was not *Paul* converted after Christ's resurrection? Had he not his whole doctrine of Christianity, particularly his *peculiar* Gospel, by immediate revelation from Christ? Does he not expressly assert, that this his *peculiar* Gospel was by the illumination of the Spirit, shewn to be consonant to prophecies of the Old Testament? And is not

not the making this out, the main design of his Epistles to the idolatrous *Gentiles*, in order to establish them in the liberty of the Gospel in opposition to the *Judaizers*? How can we (considering by whom the doctrine of the Gospel was first proposed to the world) imagine, it could have any spread without such illuminating gifts of the Holy Ghost, as the New Testament supposes were bestowed on the Apostles? And how is the supposition these Gentlemen go upon consistent with any tolerable notion of such illuminating gifts?

The notion of arguments *ad homines* as by some understood to be used by the Apostles, *viz.* arguments from false principles, used by them in compliance with those that held these principles, seems to me attended with even greater difficulties than the former. Would the Apostles use such a fallacious way of reasoning without the least guard, the least caution? Would they never drop the least hint of the difference between these, and other arguments? Never shew the least difference in the stress they laid on them; never drop a word of the nature of these reasonings, to prevent the exposing Christianity to the contempt of wiser men, and closer reasoners?

Here was, we will suppose, an idle notion prevailing among the *Jews* of that time, that every thing almost in the Law, and Prophets,

phets; and even in the histories of the Old Testament was, I cannot tell how, but in some mystical way, I suppose, prophetical of the Messiah; the Apostles might well enough upon this take notice, on some things falling out in Jesus's life exactly similar to antient events, of this similitude. But would they lay the same stress on such similitudes, as on demonstrative arguments from real prophecies? Would they quote these in no other manner than the others? When they refer to those others, would they never once take notice, that they did not imagine there was a necessity of shewing a parallel event, in Jesus's history to these antient events, and thus avoid the danger of exposing Christianity to the unanswerable objections of the *Jews*, as often (which might be very often, for I know not why the Providence of God should be concerned, to gratify the foolish expectations of superstitious men) as nothing in Jesus's history could be found to parallel antient events?

But what at once determines this matter, and shews the vanity of all such hypotheses, is plain fact, that grand enemy to airy speculations. Let us consider then not how we may fancy the Apostles would reason, but how in fact they did reason. Read but the *Acts of the Apostles*. You may think (tho' I verily believe without grounds) the Apostles argued wrong, but you must immediately see they were serious reasoners, and in good

earnest believed their own arguments. They argue directly from the Old Testament that the Messiah was to suffer, to rise again, &c. this they prove to the *Jews* who believed the Old Testament and yet had other notions of the Messiah from passages in the Prophets; passages therefore certainly differently understood by those *Jews*, with whom they contended. This the Apostles were apprehensive of, and therefore endeavour by arguments (which we have on some occasions recorded in the *Acts*) to establish their own interpretations. I cannot say what notion these Gentlemen may have of arguments *ad homines*, but I think these I have been speaking of would not commonly pass for such. The greatest number of the Epistles are St. *Paul's*, and those designed directly from the Old Testament to establish this point, *viz.* that it was from the beginning the design of God, to call even the idolatrous *Gentiles*, and admit them to the privileges of the Messiah's kingdom, without their being proselyted to the *Jewish* law.

The plain truth of the case is, sometimes mere allusions, which are not designed for arguments, sometimes arguments *a simili*, which are indeed solid arguments, and sometimes arguments not from *mistaken* principles, but *just* concessions of an adversary, have been mistaken for arguments *ad homines*; and then it is no wonder, they fancy the

the New Testament (and they might as well almost every book that is written even in our own age, and country) to be full of them.

I considered several of these pretended arguments *ad homines* in the review, and I shall here add a few more.

The first I shall take notice of, shall be *Rom.* vi. 19. where it is supposed, the Apostle apologizes for his drawing his argument from the *Roman* customs relating to freedom; but the plain truth of the case is this; his argument is just, and solid, and does not depend at all on any customs of the *Romans*, only he had illustrated it to them by a similitude drawn from these customs of theirs, and this he tells them he did in compliance with their weakness.

The next instance shall be, the course of the Apostle's reasoning in *Cor.* xv. for the resurrection of believers to eternal life, which I apprehend stands thus. Christ is risen; for otherwise, we preached a doctrine as from God, and this attested by the most wonderful discoveries of more than human knowledge, and power, and you also received this Gospel so attested, both of us to no purpose in the world; otherwise, we Apostles, the witnesses of Christ's resurrection, tho' eye-witnesses, perfectly disinterested, and confirming our testimony by discoveries of more than human knowledge, and power, are false witnesses; otherwise, you to whom

offers of forgiveness in the name of God have been made by men shewing their commission from God in all the ways that can be expected, are yet necessarily continued under the guilt of your sins; otherwise, those that have hazarded every thing for a good conscience, shall wholly lose the happiness they have through unavoidable mistake ever expected.

Christ then is risen: And if so, believers must rise, for death is the punishment of sin; that *entered* therefore by the first sinner, and is *continued* on all, all being conformed to him in sin; life is the reward of righteousness; that enters therefore by the first righteous man, *viz.* Christ, and all who are conformed to him in righteousness, are in proportionable degrees to be partakers with him in a blessed immortal life.

Christ being risen is exalted to his kingdom, which must continue 'till he hath put all enemies under his feet; it is plain therefore from Christ's resurrection, that believers must rise. This argument of the Apostle, for believers resurrection from Christ's, reaches from *ver. 12.* to *29.*

After this, from *ver. 29.* to *33.* he presses them with some other absurdities that would follow the denial of the resurrection of believers; as that baptism, which yet they *justly* acknowledged and submitted to as a most reasonable institution, would serve

serve no valuable end, since it supposes the hope of eternal life ; and that the Apostles, who by the gifts of the Holy Ghost they exercised themselves, and conferred on others, shewed they were commissioned by God, would yet act a foolish part in hazarding every thing valuable here, without any reasonable expectation of a *peculiar* happiness hereafter.

If Christ be not risen, there is no future life ; and then we who have suffered for our acting according to the best judgment we could form, in adhering to him, are of all men most miserable.

The next instance I shall take notice of, of a falsely supposed argument *ad homines*, shall be the Apostle's reasoning concerning *Melchisedec*. But in order to prepare the way for this I must observe,

(1.) That I take *Melchisedec* to be Christ himself. And to make this clear, I observe,  
 i. That the passage in *Genesis*, relating to *Melchisedec*, will admit of this sense. After the war mentioned in the context was ended, *Melchisedec*, or the King of righteousness, and King of *Salem*, or King of peace met *Abraham*, who was also Priest of, or to the most High. The word here translated *Priest* does not always signify a sacrificer, (and there is no instance of this kind recorded of him,) but a chief minister to a Prince ; and then it is very natural that he should be called here

*Priest of, or to the most high God. Melchizedec* may be considered as the proper name of this King, and the title King of *Salem*, as given him in contradistinction to the warlike Princes mentioned in the context.

2. This agrees with the account of the Psalmist, *Psal. cx.* concerning him who is Priest after the order of *Melchizedec*, viz. that he sits on the right hand of God.

(3.) The being a Priest after the order of *Melchizedec*, cannot be supposed by the Apostle to signify, that there is an order of Priests of which *Melchizedec* was the first, and Christ the second; for he designs to prove Christ to be the only Priest of his order, ver. 3, 23.

4. The Apostle mentions *Melchizedec's* blessing *Abraham*, but as the *Levitical* Priests also blessed the people, that cannot be the main point of likeness: It must, one would think, be this, that *Melchizedec* as priest, or chief minister to the most high God, has power to bestow the blessings, which he has obtained by intercession.

5. A comparison must be ever between two things, but it may be between two things that have a reference to one single person. Thus the Messiah's government of *Israel* before his resurrection, and his universal dominion after his resurrection may be compared together, see *Heb. i. 8, 9.*

Thus

Thus his priesthood exercised towards *Abraham* and his descendants by *Isaac*, may be compared with his priesthood in which he was invested after his resurrection, which is of an *universal* extent.

6. When there is a priest described that is to have no pedigree, and to be the only one of his order, having no predecessors, or successors, and there is a seeming comparison of him with any other priest, and it may be shewn that that other priest may be understood of the same person exercising his priesthood at a *different time*, and to *different* subjects, that is certainly to be admitted as the most easy, and natural sense of the writer.

7. Of this *Melchizedec* the Apostle asserts, \* that he is made like the Son of God, or as a Son of God (one who is intitled to an eternal inheritance, com. *Jo.* i. 14.) *he abides a Priest continually, or forever*, ver. 3. He is represented, ver. 8. as one, who in contradistinction to the *Levi-*

\* There is not the least impropriety in such language as this, such a man acts *like himself*, such a man is dealt with by others in a manner suited to his character. The character of a Son of God is, one that receives an *eternal inheritance* from God; Christ then was dealt with in a manner becoming the Son of God, and *heir of all things*, when he was *determined*, or *mark'd out* as the Son of God, *with power*, by his resurrection from the dead, *Rom.* i. 4. While he was here on earth, he was in the form of a servant or slave, one not intitled to an *eternal inheritance*, but at his resurrection (at which time God said to him, thou art a Priest, &c. chap. v. 5, 6.) he was likened to the Son of God.

tical priests, who were mortal men, is witnessed to by the scriptures, as living, i. e. living forever, *viz.* In the cxth Psalm, which represents the Messiah as made a Priest for ever, after the order of *Melchizedec*, com. ver. 3. with *Psal. cx. 1.*

It cannot be said of *Melchizedec*, that he is witnessed to by the scripture as living, i. e. living for ever, and so exercising his priesthood for ever, any more than of any particular persons among the levitical priests, merely because the Scripture does not make express mention of his death, or the end of his office.

2. If we understand the Apostle by *Melchizedec* to mean Christ, his argument is direct, and conclusive. It stands thus; the Gospel is more excellent than the Law, as appears from Christ's being more excellent than all those, that you who are under the Law make your boasts of, than the Angels by whom the Law was delivered, chap. i. than *Moses* the great minister of the law, chap. iii. than *Abraham* himself in whom they made their boasts, since *Abraham* himself was blessed by *Melchizedec*, i. e. Christ; now the less is ever blessed by the greater. Christ is a Priest after the order of  $\ddagger$  *Melchizedec*, *Psal. cx.* that

$\ddagger$  I suppose with the late learned Commentator on the *Hebrews*, the beginning of chap. vii, connected with chap. v. 10 and

is, he is an *heavenly, royal, and immortal Priest, which the Levitical priests were not*; the Gospel of Christ then, must be more excellent than that *Law*, a great part of which consisted of orders relating to the *Levitical Priesthood.* \*

*Corol.*

and all between included in a parenthesis. I imagine the *Apostle's* reasoning to stand thus; there are two Priesthoods described in the Old Testament, that which consisted in making atonements by sacrifice, as the Aaronical, and that which consisted in bestowing blessings, by a royal power received from God, as the *Melchizedecian*. That Christ's was of the latter sort (which every one sees at first sight to be more excellent than the former) he proves from the *Psalmist*, who represents God as speaking to the *Messiah*, as ordained by him a *Priest for ever*, after the order, not of *Aaron* (to repeat his sacrifice continually) but of *Melchizedec*, to confer *as a King appointed by God* blessings continually on his people, chap. v. 10. Then in the beginning of chap. vii. he strengthens his argument by declaring, that he, this man, *viz.* the *Messiah* was (which probably was a truth unknown before) the very person, called *Melchizedec* in *Genesis*. To him agree all the characters either in *Genesis*, or in the *Psalmist*, of a *Melchizedecian Priest*, *viz.* a *singular, royal, heavenly, perpetual Priest*,

\* Sir Norton Knatchbul has avoided most of the difficulties mentioned above another way. He interprets the ὁρος, chap. vii. 1. of Ἰησοῦς, mentioned chap. vi. 20. and puts ὁ Μελχιζέδεκ in apposition to Ἰησοῦς; and makes a parenthesis from ὁ Μελχιζέδεκ ver. 1. to ὃν τὸ Θεοῦ, ver. 3. q. d. for this person, *viz.* Jesus the true *Melchizedec*, &c. or of whom *Melchizedec* was a faint resemblance, as it is said this rock was Christ. And then, *ver.* 8. he in like manner interprets of Christ; here *i. e.* on earth they that die receive tithes, mere mortal men are priests, *ver.* 23, 28. but there, *i. e.* within the veil, or in heaven, ch. vi. 19, 20. he (supply *εἰ*) is, of whom it is witnessed, *viz.* in cxth Psalm, that he liveth. Com. *ver.* 24, 28.

If this interpretation be true, still the Apostle's argument is conclusive. For the Apostle's conclusion follows from what is laid down by the *Psalmist*, *Psal. cx.* from whence the Apostle might well argue with the *Jews* and *Judaizers*. The *Psalmist* describes the *Messiah* as an *heavenly, eternal, and royal Priest*, and therefore he has a priesthood superior to the *Aaronical Priests*, who were

*Corol.* We see what our Saviour means by saying, that *Abraham* desired to see his day, i. e. the time of his appearing on earth, that he

were earthly, mortal Priests, and no Kings, which was what the Apostle was arguing. There are two Priesthoods described in Scripture, the Aaronical, which consisted in offering sacrifices, and the Apostle shews how Christ perfected the design of that, according to the Prophecy of him, *Psal.* xlii<sup>th</sup>, and other places; and the *Melchizedecian*, or that which was like *Melchizedec's*, of whom we read nothing but that he was King of a certain place, that he blessed *Abraham*, and that he treated him as a Prince. Now *David* having said, *Psal.* cx. that his Lord, i. e. the Messiah was appointed a Priest for ever, after the order of *Melchizedec*, or like *Melchizedec*, the Apostle descends to particulars, in order to shew this likeness. It seems to me that the only thing the Psalmist had in view, was the Messiah's being appointed for ever in the heavens a royal Priest, to bestow blessings on God's People, as *Melchizedec* did on *Abraham*; that at least was what he had chiefly in his view, though whether, as he mentions his sitting at God's right-hand, an honour peculiar to him, he has not some reference to *Melchizedec's* having no Predecessor or Successor (at least none related in story) I cannot say; the Apostle takes notice of the likeness in the name, *Melchizedec*, King of righteousness, and King of *Salem*, or King of peace; it is no matter whether the Psalmist had any view to this resemblance or no. It is sufficient to the Apostle's argument if Christ were a King of such characters as these, and this might be concluded from the trust the Psalmist supposes committed to him by God. He next takes notice of his having no genealogy, as to his Priesthood; thus Christ has no Predecessor or Successor: And lastly, of the long continuance of it, there being no time fixt, as there was for the Aaronical Priesthood, for its beginning, or ending. To this particular also Christ's Priesthood bore a resemblance, which is to continue for ever, from the time he was invested in it, viz. his resurrection.

In all these instances it is observable, that as there is some resemblance between Christ and *Melchizedec*, so there is a disparity also. *Melchizedec* was King of *Salem*, Christ Lord of heaven and earth; He had no genealogy as to his Priesthood, Christ is such a Priest as there never was any equal to him; He had a longer term of Years to exercise his Priesthood than the Aaronical Priests, but Christ has an eternal Priesthood. Thus as to the Aaronical Priesthood, at the same time that the Apostle shews some resemblance

he saw it, and was glad, which the Jews naturally interpreted of his living in *Abraham's* time; and our Saviour seems to confirm their interpretation, by saying, that he not only lived in *Abraham's* days, but before them also, since before *Abraham* was, he was. And by referring them to the history of *Melchizedec* in *Genesis*, he intimates, that which he would not openly declare, viz. that he was greater than *Abraham*, since he was *Priest to the most High God*, treated *Abraham* as a King, and blessed him, which is the act of a superior to an inferior : see *John* viii. 56.— *ad Calcem.*

The last instance of a falsely supposed argument, *ad homines*, that I shall take notice of, shall be the Apostle's, *Heb.* xiii. 9---14. He endeavours to take them off from their excessive fondness for the Law, and the stress they laid on the distinction therein

resemblance between that and Christ's, v. g. as the High-Priest by the blood of beasts which he carried into the holiest, made atonement for the sins of the people, he shews a disparity also ; and therefore it will be no objection against this interpretation, that *Melchizedec's* Priesthood and Christ's do not answer in every thing, provided there be a resemblance as far as the Apostle observes it, and in the points of difference, Christ's Priesthood has the superiority. Thus v. g. Christ had a beginning of his Priesthood, whereas none is assigned to *Melchizedec's*, on which account he is said to have no beginning of days ; but still there is a resemblance here, viz. in the long duration of both these Priesthoods compared with the Aaronical, and Christ's has in continuing for ever, after his resurrection, the superiority to them both.

placed

placed between meats and drinks, and the privilege they had in covenanting with God by eating of the sacrifices provided by the Law. The course of the Apostle's reasoning is this. You boast of the privilege you have in eating the legal sacrifices, consider yourselves rather as *Christians*, and let your boasting be such as becomes that character; consider, that whatever *temporal*, or *political* blessings you may partake of *through the Law*, yet you are to expect *spiritual*, and *eternal* blessings *only through Christ*; his obedience to death was that acceptable sacrifice, or that service performed to God with as great acceptance as sacrifices under the Law, which procured for him an admission into heaven, and a power of giving eternal life to all, whom the Father has given into his hands asowardly, well-disposed persons to be trained up for it. Boast as much as you will of your privilege of eating of the *Levitical* sacrifices, you know very well there were some of them, *viz.* the whole burnt offerings, which were expiatory, (to which Christ bore the nearest resemblance) which even the Priests themselves were not to eat of; if you would partake therefore of the benefit of this sacrifice of Christ, you must be conformed to him, particularly in a readiness to suffer, whenever the Providence of God calls you to it: I compared him just now to the sacrifices

crifices of expiation, they were burnt without the camp, and in like manner Christ suffered without the gates of *Jerusalem*; and so must you, in conformity to his example, be ready to quit your agreeable habitations in that city, and go forth manfully to suffer in the place without the gates, where malefactors are wont to be executed.

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## C H A P. XXVIII.

*A review of the scheme of St. Paul's reasonings in his three argumentative Epistles.*

THE Jews had been for many ages distinguished as the people of God, by that law given them by God as their King, which separated them from the rest of the world. This distinction between them and the rest of the world they thought was always to continue, and that the law of *Moses* was ever to be the law of God's kingdom, to all those that were admitted into it. With this notion many of the Jews came into the Church of Christ; controversies would therefore naturally arise on this head. St. Paul was particularly appointed the Apostle of the *Gentiles*, and admitted even

those amongst them that had been idolaters, upon their faith in one God, and one Mediator, without circumcision, contrary to the sentiments of the *Judaizers*. He must then of course be engaged in their disputes. From the consideration of the circumstances of the Church in the first age; one would naturally suppose such controversies should arise, and therefore the accounts of such controversies are credible, and the several facts on which Christianity is built, do strengthen, and support each other.

If the Gospel be from God, one would naturally expect provision made against such difficulties, as it might easily be foreseen, the Christian Church at its first planting, would be in. Accordingly, as I have already shewn, the gifts of the Holy Ghost do very happily supply all the wants of the first Christians. And thus in particular it will be easily seen they do this we are now speaking of, since there was not only one gift of the Spirit, *viz.* that of knowledge, which enabled some to shew the agreeableness of God's design of admitting the *Gentiles* into his kingdom without submission to the law of *Moses*, to the revelations contained in the Old Testament; but besides this, God's bestowing the gifts of the Spirit on the *Gentile* believers, tho' uncircumcised, equally with the *Jewish* believers, served to determine this

this controversy, and clearly shewed not only that the *Gentiles*, even the idolatrous, as well as the devout *Gentiles*, were received into God's kingdom on their faith, but also that in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature, or faith which worketh by love. And thus in fact we see, that the holy Ghost descending first on the devout, *Act*s x, xi, and xv. and then the idolatrous *Gentiles*, *Act*s xiii. did convince persons that they were the people of God as well as believing *Jews*, *Rom.* v. 5. xiii. 16. And by this fact St. *Paul* every where in his Epistles, supports his assertion, that faith in Christ without the law is now the term proposed to *all*, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, of acceptance with God.

These hints I hope will be of use in order to the more thorough understanding two of St. *Paul*'s argumentative Epistles, the *Romans* and *Galatians*, to which purpose therefore I shall now apply them, beginning with the first mentioned, *viz.* that to the *Romans*. Chap. i. 16, 17. the Apostle declares as the cause of his steady adherence to the Gospel, and readiness to preach it to all sorts of persons, its excellency as a means to promote the salvation of *all*, whether *Jew*, or *Gentile*, that believe. The accepting *all*, without distinction of families, nations, &c. that believe, he shews to be the

method God has now set on foot, agreeably to the many promises made in the Old Testament to faith, particularly that of God by the Prophet *Habakkuk*, to them that should by a firm belief in God's promise of deliverance from the *Babylonian* power, continue steady to their duty, since all these promises to faith suppose this to be God's method in justifying men, *viz.* accepting faith, or sincerity for righteousness. The Apostle's reasoning seems to proceed thus: There can be no acceptable obedience performed but from a principle of faith, and there can be no faith influencing men of *imperfect* virtue to the practice of their duty, but a faith in God as a rewarder of *sincerity*; if then God has made promises to those, who are influenced to their duty, by faith, here is a plain declaration made of God's accepting *sincerity*.

The Apostle goes on to shew the wisdom of this method of the Gospel, by considering the state, not (as is commonly imagined) of every individual of mankind in every age, (for what he says here of both *Jews*, and *Gentiles*, won't hold to every individual of either,) but of the *main body* of *Jews* and *Gentiles* in most ages, and particularly that in which the Gospel appeared.

The *Gentiles* had the discoveries made them of a wise, and powerful Author, and Governour of all things, and of a law which

which they were under to him; but they turned from his worship to that of idols, and in the most notorious instances broke the great law of reason, or truth which they were under. And thus they had deserved the wrath of God; still, but not so much as the main body of the *Jewish* nation, particularly at the time the Gospel appeared, who were equally corrupt, and that, when they not only were well acquainted with the great law of truth, but knew the sanctions of this law, *viz.* life and death, which they might easily learn from the threatening to *Adam* for the breach of the positive law, that was superadded to the natural he was before under. God is not a partial being, but will render to every man, *Jew*, or *Gentile*, according to his works, to those among the *Jews*, who persist in the practice of virtue to the end of their lives, in hopes of glory, and immortality, (the blessings of the *Abrahamick* covenant) he will give eternal life; but to those that are contentious (which is ever the character, in St. *Paul's* Epistles, of those that expected righteousness by the ceremonial law,) and do not obey the truth, (do not submit to the doctrine of righteousness by faith, taught to *Abraham*, which he frequently calls the truth in his Epistles, as *Gal.* iii. 1, &c.) but (placing ceremonies in the room of substantial goodness) obey unrighteousness, indignation, and wrath, tribulation and anguish

to every soul that doth evil, to the *Jew* first, who has had the greatest advantages, by not only knowing the moral Law, but the sanctions of it, life and death, and also to the *Gentile*, who tho' he has been ignorant of the *positive* sanctions of the moral Law, yet has known the *law itself*, and its *natural* sanctions : but glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good, to the *Jew* first, (who has been animated to the practice of virtue by the promise of this glory) and to the *Gentile* also, (who tho' ignorant of any such promise, yet has been excited to the same practice, from the natural notion of God as a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.) These recompences God will render to all, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men's hearts by Jesus Christ, according to the Gospel, which was in a peculiar manner committed to me to preach, *viz.* the doctrine of God's accounting *faith* in all, *Jews*, or *Gentiles*, circumcised, or uncircumcised, for righteousness ; chap. ii. 6—16.

And thus it appeared, not only that the Gospel method of justification was necessary for the main body of mankind, but that there was great wisdom in proposing it at the time, when it was proposed, because then, the world stood in the greatest need of such a revelation : And thus the Apostle has effectually shewn the wisdom of the Gospel, in opposition to the pretensions of the two

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great adversaries of it, *viz.* *Heathen* idolaters, and *Jewish* zealots, to whom, the black characters the Apostle gives do very well suit.

But as the description the Apostle had given in his three first chapters, of the *Heathen*, and *Jewish* worlds, was designed only to include the generality of both, especially at the time the Gospel appeared; so in the ivth chapter, the Apostle comes to consider the case of particular pious persons mentioned in Scripture, and to shew on what grounds they were accepted with God.

*Abraham* is said in Scripture to be justified, and he is proposed as the great pattern of justification. Did God justify him then by declaring him a perfectly righteous person, and so entitled to the reward of eternal life? No; but by counting faith to him for righteousness, setting faith to account, as what should intitle him to the reward of righteousness, which is the same as not imputing sin, according to the Psalmist, or not setting that to account, in order to punishment. Thus *Abraham* was justified in the same way, as God may now justify the ungodly *Gentiles*, *viz.* by forgiving their sin. But if it should be said there is this difference, *viz.* that *Abraham* was circumcised, which these *Gentiles* were not; the Apostle answers, that *Abraham's* faith was counted to him for righteousness before he was circumcised,

circumcised, after that, circumcision was appointed as a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had being yet uncircumcised. And thus (as God is not a partial Being, but every where, equally approves of equal degrees of virtue) *Abraham* was set forth as the pattern, according to which, all *believers* whether circumcised, or uncircumcised, in all ages, should be justified.

God promised to be the God of *Abraham*, and his seed, and so to give them an inheritance fitting for him to give, who was the great Disposer of all things. But here, the seed of *Abraham* entitled to the blessing promised, are plainly not those that are of the law. For then, the promise made to faith is vacated, the Law of *Moses* reviving on men's minds the sense of the first Law to *Adam*, which required perfection as the condition of life, and thus fix'd the proper punishment to the breach of God's Laws, *viz.* death, which all therefore as sinners, are obnoxious to, from which, the Law of *Moses* which made no promises but of temporal blessings to *sin-  
cerity*, could not deliver them; again, eternal life would then be conferred as a matter of strict debt, and not of grace; and lastly, a great part of *Abraham's* seed, *viz.* all those that were imitators of him among the *Gentiles*, (see and compare *Rom.* ix. 7, 8. *Gal.* iv. 28, 29. *Heb.* ii. 16.) would be excluded the benefit of the *universal* promise.

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But that these *Gentile* believers shall not be excluded, appears plainly from hence, that as God is not a partial Being, if he counted faith to *Abraham* for righteousness, he must count it to *all* for righteousness : If he bestowed on *Abraham's* faith, a reward proportioned to the greatness of it, i. e. to that good disposition from which it proceeded, which enabled him to rely on the power of God in the most difficult circumstance, *viz.* for the effecting what was contrary to the common course of things, the giving him a son in his old age, giving him in a manner from the dead, ver. 19. (compare *Heb.* xi. 12, 19.) and to its force in producing a steady course of obedience in the most trying cases; he will also bestow an equal reward on equal degrees of faith, in the *Gentiles*, i. e. on their belief of the resurrection of Christ, (contrary to the common course of things, and to all their former notions) and that steady course of obedience, even in the most difficult circumstances, which is the effect of it.

In the vth chapter, the Apostle having fully proved that the *Gentiles* were justified by faith, proceeds to sum up the privileges they were hereby intituled to, in common with the *Jewish* believers; peace with God, whereas before, they were in the kingdom of his enemy, the devil; the favour of God, and a well grounded hope of immortality ;

afflictions for the sake of the Gospel working for their good, since they were enabled to bear them well, being by means of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, testifying that they were children of God, and heirs of heaven, inspired with courage; and lastly, a right to glory in God as their God, through Christ, who has made an atonement for them, as well as for the *Jewish* believers, ver. 1, to the 12th. After this, the Apostle proceeds to consider the case of all mankind before, and after Christ. In giving mankind reason, God has given a law to all; but for the farther security of obedience to this Law, God was pleased to *Adam*, the head of all human race, (from whom the tradition might spread amongst his descendants in, many generations,) to declare the sanctions of this law, *viz.* life, and death. *Adam* was formed with a mortal body, 1 Cor. xv. 44—49. but such, as should have been preserved immortal, by the power of God, if he had continued obedient. But as he did not, he incurred the penalty, *viz.* death, he was turned out of paradise, and debarred from the tree of life. All his posterity are born out of paradise, and none have a right to the tree of life, (for tho' infants are *innocent*, yet they are not *righteous*) all that are come to the use of their reason, have a law given them, which they have broke, tho' they have not all, like *Adam*, sinned against a positive law

law threatening death. From *Adam* to *Moses* men died universally, but in that interval, there was no law threatening death but this to *Adam*, in consequence of which therefore, all died. *Moses's* law was not as yet given, and the law of nature did not affix the punishment of death to sin; it was therefore fixed by the law given to *Adam*. And thus you see how *Adam* resembled Christ, the one being the grand pattern of corruption, and its punishment, the other of righteousness, and its reward.

In consequence of *Adam's* disobedience, death passed on all that were conformed to him in sin, tho' they did not sin exactly in the manner he did; in consequence of Christ's obedience to death, all shall live that are conformed to him in righteousness, tho' they are not perfectly righteous as he was; it being an eternal truth, that a Being of perfect, wisdom must bestow equal recompences on those whose deserts are equal, and proportionable, according to the difference of their deserts.

But then as there was a parity between these two cases, so there is a disparity also. If the severity of God's justice were such, that in consequence of the sin of one man, death passed on all, even the *Gentiles*, who never heard of this sanction of God's law; much more will God's mercy triumph in the deliverance of all from death, through

the righteousness of one, Jesus Christ. One offence of this one person brought death, but tho' death was introduced by one offence of one man, yet it is continued by many offences of all; and yet the favour God shews through Christ to the world, shines forth in the deliverance of *all* from death. And then if it were so, that the severity of God's justice was discovered, in suffering all, even the *Gentiles* who knew nothing of this sanction of God's law, to lie under the condemnation of *Adam's* sin; much more will he be ready to receive these same *Gentiles*, on their thankfully accepting his abundant favour, and the gift of righteousness, to an higher, and more glorious reward, than was at first promised to *Adam*.

This therefore in short was the case of all, from *Adam* to *Moses*, all die, in consequence of the sanction of death being fixed to God's law in the revelation made to *Adam*, even tho' there was no law besides that threatened death to sin; and thus, in consequence of the same law, the *Gentiles* since *Moses* have died universally. But the benefits of Christ's obedience to death, are of equal extent with the miseries by *Adam's* sin introduced into the world, and therefore those among the *Gentiles* that are conformed to Christ's righteousness, i. e. *Gentile* believers, shall be restored to life by Christ. Between the entrance of death by *Adam*, and

and life by Christ, the Law of Moses was given, but by the breach of it, the condemnation was aggravated; so that the breakers of that positive law which was superadded to the law of nature, in contempt of its sanctions of life, and death, stand in need of greater grace from Christ, in order to their being accepted to life notwithstanding their aggravated offences. \*

In the vith chapter, the Apostle answers an objection which might arise out of what he had before said; but if the grace of God be more discovered in pardoning sin, the greater it has been, should not we continue in sin, that grace may abound? The A-

\* In the 12th verse the Apostle is shewing, that as by one man's sin death entred into the world, so by one man's righteousness life also entred. But as he designed to shew not only the occasion of the introduction of sin, but of its continuance in the world, viz. by the personal sins of men, about which there immediately arises a difficulty how this could be, when from *Adam* to *Moses* there was no Law threatening death; before the Apostle comes to shew, how Christ's righteousness and its effects answered to *Adam*'s sin and its effects, he answers that difficulty, ver. 13, 14. At the end of the 14th verse he asserts, that *Adam* was a figure of Christ. How he was so he shews, ver. 18, which therefore should be connected with ver. 14, all between being a parenthesis, in which he shews the disparity, before he comes to explain the parity between *Adam*, and Christ. And then, ver. 19, he shews how Christ by righteousness brought in life, as *Adam* by sin brought in death: This 19th verse is therefore to be connected with ver. 12. in this manner, wherefore as by one man sin entred into the world, and death by sin, as thus, I say, by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. All therefore from the middle of ver. 12. to ver. 19. is to be read in a parenthesis, and then the Apostle's whole Discourse is well connected together, as the attentive reader will see.

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postle shews the absurdity of this inference, by representing the state of Christians as a state of conformity to Christ, particularly to his death, and resurrection. Now Christ having by his death, put off even the likeness to sinful flesh, must be free from sin. ver. 7. (compare 1 Pet. iv. 1, 2.) and therefore so ought his disciples. Christ has once by his death, paid the debt due as it were to the sins of men for which he died, and now he lives to the service of God, as we also should do. Sin shall not now prevail over us to death, because we are not under the rigorous dispensation of the law, but the mild one of the Gospel; and this instead of encouraging sin, should quicken us to greater degrees of holiness. If we are conformed to Christ's resurrection in rising to a new life of holiness, we shall also in being raised to a blissful eternal life; whereas on the other hand, if we continue (as we did in *Heathenism*) to obey sin as our master, we shall receive his wages, *viz.* death.

In the viith chapter, the Apostle addresses to the *Jewish* Christians in the Church of *Rome*, as he had in the former chapter to the *Gentile*, and shews the obligations Christianity lays on the former, as well as the latter, to holiness. He begins with this, *viz.* that they are now no longer under the law, but the gracious dispensation of Christ; the law can have dominion over them no longer than

than that law lives, or is in force. The woman that is married is under a law to her husband, but not after the death of her husband, and so the death, or the cessation of the force and efficacy of the law she was under to her husband. Now Christ by his death, has united both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and so made the law of *Moses* cease to be the law of God's kingdom.

From being subject to the law of *Moses*, we are now become subject to the law of Christ. We are now subject to the law of Christ, which conveys the Spirit to all that receive it, as the earnest of eternal life, and thus are encouraged and excited to greater degrees of holiness than we are under the law, during our continuance under which sin prevailed, and by the prevalence of this, tho' it were but in one instance, by reason of the rigour of the law, we became subject to death. Not that the law in its own nature had a tendency to promote sin; on the contrary, the law not only shews us plainly our duty, and that in some particular instances, in which we should not otherwise easily have discovered it, but also adds a strong motive to the performance of it from its sanctions, *viz.* life, and death. It was a positive law of God, *viz.* that to *Adam* which fix'd death as the punishment of sin, and the law of *Moses* has since revived on men's minds, the sense of that first law. Had it

it not been for such a law, sin had not had its penalty of death fixed to it. When therefore I consider my self as without the written law, I see indeed my duty in many instances, but neither hope for life as the reward of righteousness, nor fear death as the punishment of sin. When I come to the knowledge of a positive law threatening death to sin, I see what I have deserved, and what I must expect, but can have no relief from such a law, since I have two principles within me, reason, and appetite; and tho' reason falls in with the dictates of the law, yet appetite prevails, to the subjecting me to death by the breach of the law, which tho' it were but in one instance, makes me liable to its penalty. Not that death is a natural consequence of the law, which shews me the way to life, but that death must prevail thro' the prevalence of sin, or the prevalence of appetite over reason.

In the viith chapter, the Apostle shews, how the grace or favour shewn him thro' Christ delivers him from death, *viz.* as Christ set a perfect example of all holiness in his own life, and by submitting to death, when by righteousness he deserved life, procured a power of giving life to all, that are conformed to his righteousness by faith. The earnest of this life is the Spirit which Christ gives, which therefore by the hopes of so glorious an inheritance, quickens to the pursuit

pursuit of all virtue. The following therefore the dictates of the Spirit, makes us subdue the inclinations of the flesh; and we have great reason rather to follow the dictates of the Spirit, than the flesh, since the one leads to life, the other to death. We must indeed, even tho' we obey the dictates of the Spirit, suffer death as the common punishment of sin; but then we shall be raised by that same Spirit which raised Christ from the dead, to the participation of eternal life, as the reward of a conformity to Christ's righteousness. Those that have the Spirit of God have the badge of his children, *i. e.* of those that are heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. The Spirit testifies to all, even *Gentile* believers, that they are children of God, and so enables them boldly to call him Father; and this supports them under all afflictions, in hopes of the inheritance of children.

Before we *Gentiles* were converted to Christianity, we groaned under the burdens of this mortal state, and tho' we had then no notion of that eternal life, that is now revealed to us, yet we longed after that state of perfect happiness, which can be only had on our receiving immortal and incorruptible bodies; and now that we have received the Spirit as the earnest of this inheritance, we still groan under the same burden, and long for the time, when we shall  
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be declared the children of God, by being the children of the resurrection. Thus the Spirit not only testifies that we are children, and so enables us with chearful confidence to call God Father, but also shews us what our inheritance is to be ; and thus, amidst all the troubles, and calamities of life, which make us unfit with clearness, and distinctness, to present our requests before God, enables us to offer up, tho' with bitter groans, our desires of that inheritance which belongs to his children, with reasonable hopes of acceptance from God, and in the mean time, of his blessing every affliction to us, for the fitting us for the participation of our inheritance.

This we, believing *Gentiles*, have reason to hope for, since we are by the Gospel called, according to God's purpose of calling the *Gentiles*. For whom he before chose to be his people, he called by the Gospel; and whom he called, those, upon their believing, he justified; whom he justified, he determines to glorify. Thus, God by all the methods of his Providence, appears to be on the side of the *Gentile* believers, and what need they then value the opposition of the *Judaizers*? What God has already done for them, even whilst they were in the kingdom of Satan, may be a sufficient security for the fulfilment of all his promises made them, since their reception of the Gospel.

The Epistle to the *Galatians* was writ to confirm the Churches, that had been planted in that country by St. *Paul*, in the truth and purity of the Gospel, in opposition to the corrupt mixtures of Judaism, which were introduced among them by a *Jewish* false Apostle; who, the better to carry on his corrupt designs, had given out, that St. *Paul* himself had taught the necessity of observing the Law. Before therefore the Apostle comes to treat of the main argument, he endeavours in the intire first, and beginning of the second Chapter to remove that prejudice, by giving a particular account of his conduct, ever since he was called to preach the Gospel. He concludes that account with his conference with *Peter*, and reproof of him, for avoiding free converse with the *Gentile Christians* for fear of the *Jews*. The argument which he used to convince *Peter* of the error of his conduct, very naturally introduces the main subject the Apostle had in view, which therefore with a great deal of art and dexterity, he grafts upon it, chap. ii. ver. 15, &c.

The Apostle reasons after this manner; it is very unreasonable, to expect the *Gentiles* to comply with the *Jewish* Law, in order to acceptance, with God, since we who are *Jews* born, and so under the Law, yet expect acceptance with God, through faith

faith, or sincerity, and not through the obedience to a positive Law, threatening death to the least breach of it; for according to the tenor of such a Law, no man, *i.e.* no imperfectly virtuous creature, can be accepted with God,

If therefore, finding we could not have acceptance with God, according to the tenor of such a Law, we have received the Gospel of Christ, which assures us of acceptance on our sincerity, how unreasonable is it to destroy all those hopes again, by adherence to the Law, which gives no hopes of eternal life to the imperfectly virtuous; and thus, by joining two incompatible things, the Gospel, and the Law, to frustrate our just expectations, as much as if Christ, instead of being the minister of righteousness and life, were the minister of sin and death? If men would but consider the nature of the Law itself, they would see that even that leads us to expect acceptance with God in another way, and much, more if they would but attend to the design of Christ's death, through which he entred on his *universal* kingdom, composed of *believing Gentiles, as well as Jews*, and so of course vacated the ceremonial Law, which could not, in its own nature, be the Law of God's kingdom thus enlarged. This method shews the grace of God, and the reason of Christ's dying for us, for which there could

be no reason at all, if we could be justified according to the tenor of the Law ; since we should then be intitled to life without death intervening, and so needed no one to die for us.

In the third Chapter the Apostle pursues the same argument, shewing them, that it was very unreasonable for them, to quit the method of expecting acceptance with God which the Gospel revealed, for that which is laid down in the Law, since they received the Spirit, the earnest of an eternal inheritance, from a preacher of the Gospel, and not of the Law, on their receiving not the Law, but the Gospel ; since all the miracles they saw him work among them, all the supernatural knowledge and power they received on the laying on of his hands, were so many evidences of the truth of that method of acceptance with God by faith, which he taught ; since faith was counted to *Abraham* for righteousness, or God by his promise made himself as it were a debtor to *Abraham*, to bestow on him the reward of eternal life for faith, which was originally due only to righteousness ; and thus, as God is not a partial Being, faith was counted to all others, as well as *Abraham*, for righteousness. And this was particularly declared, when God set him forth as the pattern of blessedness to the whole world, that as he had been an extraordi-

nary instance of faith, so he might become the grand exemplar of that reward, which the free Grace of God had now affixed to it. Thus the faithful, of whatever family or nation, are blessed in faithful *Abraham*. And let it not be thought, that the *Jews* have herein the preference given them to the *Gentiles*, viz. that they may receive the blessing of *Abraham* another way, by the observance of the Law, since according to the tenor of the Law, none can receive it but the perfectly virtuous; the Law of *Moses* never promising any more than temporal blessings to *sincerity*, and thus leaving all that are under it just as it found them, viz. under the curse of death, due to sin by virtue of the first positive Law given to *Adam*, from which curse the *Jewish* believers are delivered only by the death of Christ, as the *Gentile* believers also are. Both have sinned, and for both Christ died: and as in the manner of Christ's death, which was the death assigned by the *Roman* Law to slaves, the desert of the *Gentiles* to be excluded the inheritance of children was shewn; so also the desert of the *Jews* to lie under the curse of the Law, was represented by his dying that death, which the Law pronounced accursed.

The *Gentile* believers then are upon the same foot with the *Jewish*, and through Christ may partake of the blessing of *Abraham*,

*braham*, viz. the Spirit, as the earnest of an eternal inheritance to all believers. And let not the *Jews* think, that this covenant with *Abraham* which secures a blessing to *Gentile* believers, can be set aside by the Law. For the covenant with *Abraham* was ratified and established, in which case even human covenants cannot be disannulled ; the promises, *viz.* that in him all nations of the earth should be blessed, were made to *Abraham*, and his seed, (God doth not say to seeds, as if he spoke concerning many persons, but as speaking of one single person, to thy seed, which though it may signify more persons than one, yet may also signify but one single person) and this seed is the Messiah ; now this covenant thus confirmed, the Law that was four hundred and thirty years after cannot disannul, to make the promise of none effect, as it must be, if the blessings were bestowed through the Law, for then it could not be of free grace. The Law then was annexed to the *Abrahamic* covenant to give men a sense of the desert of their sins, and so prepare them for receiving the blessings of the *Abrahamic* covenant from the seed of *Abraham* when he should come. In all this I am far from detracting from the Law ; it was a divine institution, given by Angels, and lodged with a mediator, *viz.* Moses. Now a mediator supposes two parties transacting, the two parties here were God, and

the *Israelites* ; will not there seem then a contradiction between these two covenants of God, with *all* mankind through *faith*, and the *Israelites* through the *Law*? Yes, if they were of the same nature, and designed for the same purposes. But this was not the case. For the Law was not given with a design to bestow life, it never promising eternal blessings to *sincerity* ; and as the Scripture declares all to be under sin, it remains, that the promised blessing is conferred on all through faith in Christ Jesus, the seed of *Abraham*. Before then the doctrine of faith was revealed by Christ, we were shut up as so many criminals in prison, in hopes of a deliverance from death only by him ; we were trained up by the Law as our School-master, for the reception of the higher institution of Christ ; tho' we had a *right and title* by virtue of the *Abrahamick* covenant, yet like children in nonage, we were treated like slaves, being debarred the possession of our inheritance ; but now by faith in Christ, we are manifested and declared, we are treated and dealt with as the children of God ; by faith which we profess at Baptism, we are intitled to the privileges Christ has procured, who was *Abraham's* seed, and therefore we are blessed in him. Before Christ came, we were in the state of bondage, debarred from our inheritance Chap. iv. 3, &c. being subject to the Law, which could only intitle us

us to the blessings of an earthly inheritance, and the ceremonies of which were but so many Rudiments, and Elements designed to train us up for an higher institution ; but now that the time is come for our being manifested to be the sons of God, God has sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem those that were under the Law from that death which the Law could not set them free from, that they might have the treatment of sons, by being put into possession of the inheritance : And thus, you *Gentile* believers also are now manifested to be the sons of God, by receiving the Spirit of God in common with *Jewish* believers, as the earnest of your inheritance. You both, *viz.* Jewish and *Gentile* believers, were formerly in the state of slaves, *i. e.* of those that are debarred of God's inheritance, the one by subjection to Idol Gods, the other to the ceremonial Law ; you *Gentiles* were in bondage the former way ; indeed this must be said in excuse for your sin and folly, that you continued thus thro' ignorance of the true God ; how unreasonable then is it, after you are *brought* to the knowledge of this true God, and are made acquainted with his will, particularly this part of it, *viz.* that God has designed an eternal inheritance for *all* believers, to turn back, and put yourselves into another sort of bondage, *viz.* to the ceremonial Law of *Moses* ?

The Epistle to the *Hebrews* was written, with a design to confirm the *Jewish Christians* inhabiting *Judea* in their steady adherence to the Gospel, in the midst of all the persecutions they met with from their unbelieving countrymen ; to which purpose the Apostle shews the preeminence of the Gospel above the Law. And for the proof of this, in the first Chapter he insists on the superior excellency of Christ, by whom the Gospel, to the Angels, by whom the Law, was delivered. Christ was absolutely, and by way of eminence and distinction *the Son of God*, appointed (after his resurrection) the Heir and Lord of all, and this was a trust suited to the dignity of his nature, by whom God made the worlds, who was the brightness of his, God's, glory, and the expressimage of his Person, and upheld all things by the word of his power. Thus, at his resurrection he was advanced as much above the Angels, as the characters given him in the Old Testament, are superior to those given the Angels. To *no one* of the Angels did God ever address himself in such language as he does to Christ, thou art my Son, (absolutely and by way of eminence, as resembling me in *universal dominion*, *Psal. ii. 8.* which no Angel, or mere man does) this day have I begotten thee; and again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son, (resembling me in *perpetual dominion*,

dominion, which no Angel, or mere man does) 2 Sam. vii. 13, 14.

When the Messiah is represented by the Psalmist, (*Psal. xcvi.*) in the glories of his kingdom (which began at his resurrection) the Angels are described as worshipping him by the appointment of God ; but when the Angels are described, they are represented as ministers of God, compared to winds, and flames of fire, for their swiftness and rapidity when they executed the divine will ; but to the Son, such language is used as this ; thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, a scepter of righteousness, is the scepter of thy kingdom : Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity, therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the Oyl of gladness above thy fellows ; (above all thy fellow-powers whether in heaven, or earth) and thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands, (thou hast settled all the powers and dominions whether in heaven, or in earth) they shall perish, (all other powers, even the heavenly ones, shall be abolished) but thou remainest, or shalt remain, (thy power shall continue.)

To Christ, God says, sit at my right-hand, till all thine enemies be made thy footstool; which was never said to any of the Angels, who are all now made ministers to Christ's

kingdom, which consists in part of those very *Gentiles*, over whom before, the Angels had dominion and authority.

The Angels had for a time dominion in this world, (this earth where we at present are,) but no dominion in heaven, (the world where we are hereafter to be,) as Christ had after his ascension to heaven, and sitting down at God's right-hand, Ch. ii. 5. Com. Chap. i. 6, 13. see *Crellius* on *Heb.* ii. 5. But now this world to come God hath put in subjection to Christ, after he had for a little while been made lower than the Angels, by taking mortal flesh, according to the testimony of the Psalmist, in the viiiith Psalm, *What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him for a little while lower than the Angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thine hands; thou hast put all things in subjection under him.* This implies, that nothing is to be left that is not put under man, but this we do not see yet fulfilled; only thus much we see, as an earnest and pledge of the rest, Jesus who was for a little while made lower than the Angels by being subject to death, (which the Angels are not) crowned with glory and honour, that so having tasted death *for all believers*, whether *Jews*, or *Gentiles*, he might save them all. And whatever the *Jews* through

through their corrupt notions of the Messiah, as a *temporal Saviour of Israel* only, may vainly think, this was a wise design of Providence; since it became the supreme Governor of the world, in bringing many sons (the multitude of his sons, or the whole number of his sons, believing *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*) to glory, to make the Captain, the Prince and Leader of their salvation perfect, to consecrate him to his Priesthood, by sufferings, (by that sacrifice of himself, which he offered up to consecrate him to his eternal Priesthood in the heavens, as the Aaronical Priests were consecrated to their Priesthood here on earth by sacrifices,) for both Christ who cleanses believers from guilt by his sacrifice, and *all* believers, whether *Gentiles*, or *Jews*, that are cleansed by his sacrifice, are of one Father, *viz.* God, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them Brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my Brethren; and that by Christ's Brethren, are not only meant those that are of the same stock of *Israel* with him, is plain, because as he is represented like an obedient Son placing his confidence in God, so he does not disdain to call all those that like him put their trust in God, his children, *i. e.* imitators of him, or his disciples that have learnt divine instructions from him, *Isa.* viii. 16, 17, 18.

\* As

\* As he then was manifested to be a Son of God by a child-like trust in God, so are they also by a like trust in God shewn to be his children ; as then the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same, that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, *i. e.* the devil, and deliver them, (particularly from among the *Gentiles*, Rom. viii. 15. Eph. ii. 12. 1 Thes. iv. 13.) who through fear of death, (without any hope of a restoration to life) were all their life-time subject to bondage ; for verily he taketh not hold of Angels, (to save them) but the seed of *Abraham*, *i. e.* believers like *Abraham*, from among men. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to

\* A Son of God is one, who is like the great Governor of the world in dominion and authority, Christ is the Son of God, and heir of all things ; he was begotten again by his resurrection, to an eternal inheritance ; through him, we possess our inheritance ; as death entred by sin, so life enters by righteousness, by the obedience of Jesus to death, who was perfectly righteous ; we are conformed to the image of Christ's blessed life (and thus partake of the reward first promised by God to obedient mankind) by a conformity to him in righteousness ; see Rom. v. throughout. And therefore as it is by Christ we obtain our inheritance, we are often called his seed, his children, &c. but as we are put in possession of our inheritance by Christ, so we have the immediate right and title to it through *Abraham*, by means of the promise of life first expressly made to his faith, and thus to that of all the faithful, and therefore we are called also the seed of *Abraham* ; see Rom. iv. and Gal. iii. throughout. And both as the seed of *Abraham*, and the Messiah, we are Children, and Heirs of God. According to this, which seems to me the plain Scriptural Account, Christ cannot be represented as the spiritual seed of *Abraham*, as other believers are.

be made like to his Brethren, (*i. e.* believers, by their faith shewing their relation to God as their Father, in like manner as he did) that he might be a merciful, and faithful High-Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people ; for in every particular, in which he hath suffered being tempted, he is fit to be a succourer of those that are tempted.

In the third chapter, the Apostle compares the Apostle, and High-Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, with *Moses*. They both were appointed by God to their respective offices, and were both faithful in the discharge of them ; but notwithstanding that, Christ has by far the preference to *Moses*. The church is God's house. Now just as in any house, or family, the master hath the most honour, and the nearer relation any others in the family bear to him, the more honour they have, and therefore a son has more than a servant ; so Christ who is a Son, set over God's house, must have more honour than *Moses*, who was but a servant, and whose doctrine and institution was designed to prepare men for the most perfect dispensation by Christ. From hence, the Apostle takes occasion to warn them of the danger of rejecting the message brought by the Son of God, since it was so dangerous for the *Israelites* to reject

ject the message brought by *Moses*, that was but a servant in God's family.

This argument he farther pursues in the beginning of the fourth chapter. As there was the good news of a rest, *viz.* in *Canaan*, proposed to the *Israelites*, for their contempt of which that generation was overthrown in the wilderness, so there is a farther rest that is still promised us. Let none of the *Jewish* nation think, that they are already possess of this rest, because they observe the rest of the sabbath, or because they are entred into *Canaan*, the land of rest; for after the possession of both these rests, the Psalmist speaks of another rest beyond them, exhorting the men of his age not to harden their hearts, from the consideration of the rest proposed to them which they would thereby forfeit. And if the despising the *temporal* rest proposed by *Moses*, that was but a servant in God's house, was so dangerous to the *Israelites*, how much more dangerous will be our contempt of the *eternal* rest promised us by him, who is the Word of God, the grand agent by which he executes, as well as reveals his will, who lives for ever, and has perfect knowledge and power, to enable him fully to punish the contempt of his message? This description of Christ *ver. 12, 13.* naturally brings the Apostle back to the argument he was before upon Chap. ii. 17, 18, *viz.*

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the Priesthood of Christ, from whence he had made a digression, which lasts from the beginning of the third chapter, to ver. 14. of the fourth : from this fourteenth verse to the end of the chapter, the Apostle exhorts to a stedfast adherence to the Gospel, from the consideration of Christ's being constituted our High-Priest in the heavens, through whom all blessings are conveyed to us, and we have free access to God.

In the vth chapter, the Apostle considers the nature of the High-Priests under the Law, and shews that Christ has all the characters, that are necessary to constitute an High-Priest. An High-Priest was taken from among men, and ordained for men in things pertaining to God, to offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; he was such an one as could have compassion on the ignorant, and them that are out of the way, for that he himself is compassed with infirmity, by reason whereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins ; and lastly, he was one that was to be particularly appointed to this office by God. The Apostle begins with the last character, and shews that this agrees to Christ, since he did not claim the honour of an *eternal* Priesthood, or of being the Mediator between God and man, through whom blessings are conveyed from God to us, and our services are accepted with God, till he was appointed to this

this office at his resurrection, *ver.* 5, 6. He next shews, that the character which he had mentioned just before this last agrees to him. For though he had no sin, yet he bore the punishment of our sin, *viz.* death, and just before he suffered, (*Mat.* xxvii. 46, 50. *Luke* xxiii. 46.) offered to God, the sacrifice of earnest prayer, with strong crying and tears, that he might be delivered from death, (as accordingly he was by a glorious resurrection,) and thus by suffering he learnt the difficulty of obedience, and so is fitted to compassionate, and help frail men, *ver.* 7, 8. comp. *ver.* 2, 3. And lastly, he answers the first character the Apostle had laid down, *ver.* 1. since being consecrated to his eternal Priesthood, he is become the author, (not of *annual* redemption as the High-Priests under the Law, by their yearly expiation) but of eternal salvation to all that believe *ver.* 9. And thus, as in some respects he resembles, so in others he far exceeds the Aaronical High-Priests; and therefore, *ver.* 10. he is represented as spoken to by God (*viz.* *Psal.* cx.) as an High-Priest after the order of *Melchizedec.*\*

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\* All that follows, from *ver.* 11. to the end of the next chapter, is to be included in a Parenthesis, as the late most learned Commentator on the *Hebrews* has observed. And as what the Apostle there has is wholly of a practical nature, I shall waive the consideration of it, especially since I have nothing to add to what that excellent Author has said. Only in confirmation

How he is so, the Apostle largely shews, Chap. vii. 1—4. And from hence he infers the preeminence of Christ above the *Levitical* Priests, since being a Priest after the order of *Melchizedec*, he is superior even to *Abraham* himself, the father and head of them, who can on no account pretend to any superiority to him, ver. 4—11.

From hence he farther infers the imperfection of the *Levitical* Priesthood, and so of the Law which related to it, and thus, the expedience of that Priesthood and that Law giving way to another more perfect one, ver. 11, 12.

That there was to be another Priesthood besides the Aaronical he farther proves from hence, that the Messiah (*who was to be of the tribe of Judah*) was to be a Priest, and

mation of his interpretation of the Principles of the Doctrine of Christ, I would observe, that the more sublime doctrine relating to *Melchizedec*, which the Apostle says, the raw uninstructed persons among them would not easily take in, is a doctrine of the Old Testament, and therefore so also must the principles he speaks of be. Repentance and faith are doctrines of the Old Testament, and on these foundations, Christianity only adds, the superstructure of the doctrine of the Mediator, which makes these duties respect him; the legal purifications by washings, and sacrifices, are perfected as to their design by the purity, of which the *Christian* Baptism was a Symbol, and by the redemption procured by the sacrifice of Christ; the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment (or a judgment, the consequences of which are eternal life, or death, in the same sense as the Apostle elsewhere speaks of eternal redemption) are the motives in the Old Testament to repentance, and faith, but more clearly, and fully explained in the New.

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he was to be not a *mortal* Priest, as the Aaronical Priests, who were constituted Priests by a Law which settled the succession of *mortal* Priests, but a Priest *for ever*; and a Priest, that was the surety of a better Covenant than the Aaronical Priests were, as his Priesthood was more firm and stable than theirs, being established by the Oath of God.

The Aaronical Priests were many, because they died and were succeeded by others, but Christ lives *for ever*, and thus has a Priesthood which does not pass from him to any other; and thus is always able to save those that come to God by him, seeing he ever lives to make intercession for them; and thus is better fitted to answere our necessities than the Aaronical Priests, who needed continually to renew their sacrifices for themselves, who were ever contracting fresh pollution, and for the people, whose sins were not fully purged by their sacrifices.

But Christ offered one sacrifice for sins, and from henceforward is advanced to the highest heaven, removed from converse with men by which he might contract legal pollutions, and being the Son of God is consecrated a Priest *for ever* by his Oath; whereas the Aaronical Priests appointed by the Law, were *mere men*, subject to diseases, and death as well as others.

The chief then continues the Apostle in  
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the viiiith chapter, of what we have said is this, we have an High-Priest, that is impowered to bestow all blessings on us, being advanced to the right hand of God's throne in the heavens, a minister in heaven the most perfect sanctuary, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every High-Priest is ordered to offer gifts and sacrifices in some tabernacle or other; but Christ could not offer his in the tabernacle on earth, for in that the Aaronical Priests ministered according to the Law, who serve in that tabernacle, which is but a copy of the heavenly one the original, a shadow of that as the body, as *Moses* was ordered to make his tabernacle according to the platform shewn him in the mount (and even that platform, according to which the tabernacle in which the Aaronical Priests officiated was made, was but a copy of the heavenly one in which Christ officiates, v. 5. com. chap. ix. 23, 24.) Christ's ministry then is more excellent than that of the Aaronical Priests; and no wonder, since he is the Mediator of a better covenant, established on better promises, viz. of eternal, instead of temporal blessings.

It is plain there must be a defect in the first covenant, because God takes notice of that defect, and therefore appoints a second covenant which shall supply it; particularly the first covenant was defective in not promising *eternal forgiveness*, and the *illuminating*

nating gifts of God's Spirit, and therefore care is taken in the new covenant, that these defects shall be supplied by the clearest promises of such blessings; this is called a new covenant, which implies that that must wax old and decay.

In the ixth chapter the Apostle compares the two tabernacles, the earthly and heavenly, and the ministry performed in each of them.

The first tabernacle had ordinances of divine service, and a worldly or earthly sanctuary to perform them in. For the tabernacle was made in such a form as to consist of two parts; the first, wherein the common Priests entered to officiate; the second within a veil that parted it from the other, whereinto the High-Priest *alone* entered yearly, to make atonement for the people.

And thus it was made evident, that the way into the Holiest (the place of God's presence) was not yet manifested, whilst this frame of the first tabernacle continued; and there is the same representation now made in the Temple services. For there is now a part of the Temple, as formerly of the tabernacle, wherein the Priests offer gifts and sacrifices, which can't fully cleanse from *moral* guilt the worshipper under that dispensation, who worships God with meat and drink offerings and diverse washings, which are carnal ordinances laid on the *Jews* till the time of reformation. But

But Christ being come to the Holy of Holies, an High-Priest of good things to come, (and not of temporal blessings) entered once for all into it, through a greater and more perfect tabernacle than that which the Jewish High Priest passed through, viz. his flesh, which was not of an human or earthly structure; and not by the blood of goats and calves, but his own blood, having obtained not an annual, but an eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, purifies them from ceremonial uncleanness, and fits them for a readmission into the worldly sanctuary ; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who is not a mortal man as the Aaronical High Priests were, but thro' the *eternal Spirit* offered himself without spot to God, purge our conscience from the guilt of such crimes as expose to death, that we might be fitted to serve the living God, and so have the wages of his faithful servants, viz. eternal life? And for this purpose, he is the Mediator of a new covenant, that by the intervention of death, (which procured the blessings of the old covenant) for the obtaining the forgiveness of sins committed under the old covenant, (which that could not procure) they which are called might receive the promise not of a temporal inheritance in Canaan, but an eternal one in the heavens ; for it

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has been all along God's method in his covenant transactions with his people, to ratify his covenant with blood, to keep alive on their minds the sense of death's being the wages of sin, and in this God also accommodated himself to the antient practices in the eastern countries, of making covenants.

Where a covenant then is, there must be the death of the pacifier, of that thing or person by whose means the covenant is made. For a covenant has its force or efficacy, on the condition of death, but whilst he lives, he, the pacifier by whose means the covenant is made, has no power to confer the blessings of the covenant on any; and thus therefore the first covenant was established by blood; and the sanctuary and all the vessels of service were cleansed, and fitted for use, by blood; and under the law, the ceremonial and political forgiveness which it gave men, was that way obtained.

In conformity to this method, as there was then no admission into the worldly sanctuary, which was but a copy of the heavenly one, but by the sacrifices of beasts appointed by the law; so the admission into the heavenly sanctuary is procured by a better sacrifice. For Christ is not entered into the sanctuary made with hands, which was formed after the plan or model of the most perfect sanctuary in the heavens, but into that heavenly sanctuary itself, now to appear

pear in the presence of God for us, as the person that mediates between God and us, and procures blessings for us from God, as the High-Priest under the Law did for the *Jews*, but with this difference; the High-Priest, as he every year renewed his sacrifice; so he entered every year into the Holiest, to appear before God in behalf of the people: But now as Christ by his one sacrifice has for ever put away sin, so he enters but once into heaven to appear before God for us, with his sacrifice; and as it is appointed to men once to die, (in consequence of sin) and after this the judgment, (by which all shall be adjudged to eternal life, or death,) so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, (by procuring life for all believers) and to them that look for him, shall he appear the second time without a sin-offering, to their salvation (from death.)

Chap. x. begin. The Law then had the shadow of these good things to come, *i. e.* of eternal redemption, leading to the reasonable expectation of them some other way; as the shadow shews there is a luminous body, (for if there were no light there could be no shade) but does not represent like an image of the luminous body, on the contrary, (as shade is the very reverse of light) it shews these goods things to come to be unattainable by any methods that proposes. And this was signified in a very

lively manner, by the yearly renewal of the legal sacrifices which the High-Priest offered to God; for if these sacrifices had been so acceptable with God as to cleanse *from moral guilt*, there had been no room for the renewal of them; for God having once offered forgiveness of sins to the penitent, on the consideration (which must then be supposed *a valuable one*) of such sacrifices, persons so *qualified*, must *for ever*, in virtue of these sacrifices (whose *value continues the same*) have a right to the promised blessings.

If they had procured the forgiveness of sin, they must have taken away the obnoxiousness to the punishment of sin, i. e. to *death*, i. e. have recovered our title to *eternal* life, and having *once* recovered this title for the *penitent*, must *for ever* have confirmed it to them.

The yearly renewal of them therefore plainly shewed, that they were not designed to procure *eternal*, but only *temporal* redemption; that is to say, that whereas every breach of the Law exposed to death, a *violent* death threatened in the Law, and to be inflicted by proper ministers on the *contemners* of the Law, by means of the sacrifices appointed by the Law, particularly those that were offered once a year by the High-Priest, on the great day of atonement, persons were secured from such violent

lent death, and admitted into the worldly sanctuary ; but still they were liable to death and the perpetual continuance under it, as the wages of sin, (for which therefore there was no forgiveness provided by the Law) and so the Law did not represent the attainableness of good things to come, *i. e.* of eternal life, the reward originally due to righteousness.

From the 5th verse, the Apostle confirms this reasoning of his concerning the insufficiency of the Law, from the Old Testament. The Messiah is represented in the xlth *Psalm*, as declaring the insufficiency of the legal sacrifices to take away sin, and on that account God's preparing him a body, which in obedience to the will of God, he was to offer up as a sacrifice for sin.

He farther shews, that by the Prophet *Jeremiah* God promises to make a new covenant with the *Israelites* in the latter days, which should differ from the former in two material points; one, that it was not to be writ on tables of stone, but on the fleshly tables of their heart, by means of the illuminating gifts of the Holy Ghost to be poured out in common on the Church, which would cause a vast increase of spiritual knowledge among them ; the other, that it was to propose to men not *partial* and *temporal*, but *plenary* and *eternal* forgiveness of sins.

In the remainder of the chapter, the Apostle makes the practical use of the doctrine of Christ's Priesthood, and particularly, from thence encourages them to adhere steadfastly to his religion amidst the persecutions they met with.

The principle that must support them in this conduct is faith, *i.e.* according to his description of it chap. xi. 1. the confidence of things at a distance, and so the object only of hope, and the conviction of things not seen. This is the principle of all great actions that are performed in the world, whether *civil, or religious*. The Apostle is not careful to distinguish these, but mixes them together, either of them serving equally to his main purpose, *viz.* to shew the force and efficacy of such a faith as he had described, which when employed on those *future spiritual* blessings, their great High-Priest had procured for them, would make them go through the difficulties of adherence to Christ in their present circumstances: As it had such virtue, as to procure a favourable regard to *Abel's* sacrifice from God, discovered in a very distinguishing manner, *ver. 4.* As it procured for *Enoch* the peculiar privilege of a translation to heaven, after an extraordinary testimony born him, that he pleased God, *ver. 5, 6.* As it put *Noah* on the methods of avoiding the threatened wrath

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of God to come upon the world, ver. 7. and procured the distinguishing favour of God to him: As it disposed *Abraham* to leave a present settlement in his own land, in hopes of a future settlement some-where else, ver. 8. from the hopes of which he was not driven, tho' he was so long a stranger in the land that was promised him, ver 9. As it gave *Sarah* strength to bear seed in her old age, contrary to the common course of nature, and gave her the blessing of a most numerous posterity, ver. 12. As it disposed all the Patriarchs to a constant obedience in the midst of great difficulties, tho' they were all their life time strangers in the land of promise ver. 13—17. As it disposed *Abraham* to offer up *Isaac*, the son of the promise, ver. 17, 18, 19. As it disposed good men that had a prophetick spirit, to foretel future events ver. 20, 21, 22. (all prophetick gifts being bestowed according to the measure of faith *Rom.* xii. 3.) As it disposed *Moses*'s parents to hide him in hopes of his living to be a blessing to God's people, ver. 23. As it disposed *Moses* to exchange the pleasures and honours of *Pharaoh*'s court, for a fellowship of the sufferings of God's people, ver. 24. 25, 26. As it disposed him to leave *Ægypt*, not fearing the wrath of the King, but enduring as seeing him that is invisible, v. 27. and to appoint the Passover in token  
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of the *Israelites* preservation from the destroying Angel, ver. 28. As it made the *Israelites* pass thro' the *Red Sea*, ver. 29. and to cause the walls of *Jericho* to fall, ver. 30. miraculous powers as well as prophetic gifts being bestowed according to the measures of faith, see *Mat.* xvii. 20. *1 Cor.* xiii. 2. As it disposed *Rahab* to harbour the spies which were the means of her preservation ver. 31. As it inspired some (through hopes of victory) with courage to subdue kingdoms; others (thro' hope of the reward) to go thro' the difficulties in the way of righteousness; obtained for others the blessings God had promised them; for others miraculous deliverances; and to come quite up to the present case, made others, thro' hope of a future resurrection, suffer the most tormenting death for their religion, ver. 32—39.

The Apostle concludes his discourse on faith with this consideration, viz. that the Christians he writes to, had one advantage *above all* those that were mentioned in the foregoing list as *animated by faith to the practice of virtue*, particularly above the Patriarchs, ver. 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16. viz. that Christ is now come, the great promised blessing they were not to see the accomplishment of, but which was reserved for our times, that they without us might not

not be made perfect, ver. 39, 40; compare 1 Pet. i. 12, 13. Therefore we may be now animated to persist in the course of virtue, from the example of his sufferings, and the view of the glorious reward of them, which he took possession of for himself, and has secured us a title to, chap. xii. 1, 2, 3.

### The CONCLUSION.

The sum of all is this, natural reason furnishes us with the knowledge of those principles, that lead to virtue and happiness— A revelation from God to aid these principles, is a natural and reasonable expectation— Natural reason shews what kind of revelation is to be expected, and how attested— Christianity appears to be just such a one, supplying a fit mean for the promoting the great end of natural religion, and together with the former revelations, on which it pretends to be built, forming one complete design worthy of God, and beneficial to man. There is but one difficulty that I can think of, that yet remains, and I will endeavour here to remove it. It is this. It may be said, that in order to account for a phænomenon of nature, it is not enough to point at a sufficient cause of an effect, when there are other causes in nature as likely to produce it as that. Thus in the present

present case, a revelation like the *Christian*, attested in the manner that is, *may* come from God ; but then it may also be the effect of some superior spirit, making an impression on the minds of a number of men, which they cannot distinguish from a divine revelation.

It will be easily seen, that in this argument, it is taken for granted, that created spirits, superior to us, act in our world *at their own discretion*. If then I can prove that they are under such a Law, as that they cannot act in our world, without the *particular direction, or permission* of the supreme Governor, the whole ground-work of the objection is remov'd. For the proof therefore of this proposition, I would observe,

1. That if there be not such a Law, there can be no such thing as what we call the Laws of nature, or the Order of Nature. A *variety* of *imperfectly* wise beings, continually interposing in the manner supposed in the objection, would cause the utmost disorder and confusion, and be perfectly inconsistent with the wise and steady government of the great Author of all things. There is a constant uniform appearance in the natural world. There are certain Laws, the effects of which may be predicted. When our organs of sense are sound, the medium, distance, &c. the same, there are the same sensible appearances to the same man

man at different times, and to all men at the same time.

2. In the moral world, whatever influence superior spirits have on our minds, by means of their continual acting on matter, yet we find in ourselves no immediate impressions from any superior intelligent beings. Our own thoughts and reasonings determine us to action, and those thoughts are *occasioned* by natural means, that is, by external circumstances, the actions of other men, &c.

3. What we call improperly the active forces or powers of matter, may be owing to the continual action of some superior spirits *under divine direction*.

4. When I see in the government of the moral world just such an appearance of things, as would be the effect of the interposition of a superior good spirit under *divine direction*, I have reason to conclude such direction.

5. Such a case will be, when a *credible* person pretends a revelation from God, and the revelation is *worthy of God*, vouched by works *superior to the power of man*, and not contradicted by one appearing to act by a *greater power*.

6. When I see an interposition of a superior spirit in opposition to a pretended revelation of one that acts by a *greater power*, or *in order to advance a doctrine unworthy*

*unworthy of God*, then I have reason to conclude, that here is a *particular permission* to other spirits for wise reasons; as the exercise of men's diligence in inquiry, the trying their love to truth and virtue, the shewing men the necessity of improving their notions of natural religion, the making a visible distinction between the lovers of virtue and vice, and lastly, the punishment of those latter, by bringing them into calamities, the just deserts of that vicious temper, which disposed them to receive error, when they had a criterion to discover truth.

7. From hence we may see the reason, why though it be fit, that *men* should not be hindred from deceiving one another; yet the same cannot be concluded concerning *superior spirits* being suffered to deceive us, when there is no way left us from the nature of the doctrine delivered, or the works wrought, compared with those wrought in opposition to them, of detecting the cheat. *Human* deceptions are the consequence of free beings exerting their natural powers *amongst other free beings*, with whom they are link'd in society, agreeably to the general law, by which God governs rational free beings. *Angelical* deceptions, as above stated, would be the consequence of free beings exerting their natural powers *amongst other free beings*, not inhabi-

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inhabitants of the same world, nor linked  
in society with them, contrary to the gene-  
ral Law, by which God governs rational  
free beings.

F I N I S.



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